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Measure this now
the clarity of old ink
shy to efface
the emptiness with thingliness
or what words wing
out of the dark at us

a word is always arriving
and can a calm color
even the palest ink
hold back from that
immoderate presence
a word is?

27 January 2004

=====

Elk containers
are they, whelks
caught in strainers?
Constrain her
plummet the falconry
till her sense lands
four-feet smooth
to the tarmac,
Heathrow '87
sheep on runway

help the hammer
help the fox
hide in the banner
every thing
rhymes with every
other bringing
news nobody knows.

27 January 2004

SYNESTHESIAS

Listen the way the water says
and stand under rain

one drop soaks you whole

the cleaninging
the rush of wish

*

whisper words along the curves
and let my actual breath
maybe warm its way
along the contours to
find you
 then speak you hard

*

there is a lingering belief
in telling you, a Christmas tree inside
and spill the orchestra around
as if the word I said
was just some milk that licked you too.

28 January 2004

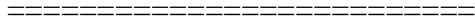
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Amazing opposites
bewilder the field –
chantry men
decoding God's
everlasting silence

–now fancy me a priest of it
gargling new
gospels still as a tree
halfway between you

I find a strange blue boulder
in the woods, female equivalent
of an ancient name, Jakob or Jasper or
how far did you
have to go to buy a loaf of bread
let alone the insidious animals you ride
every one with a mind of her own?

28 January 2004



Soft Lesbian snow light
at ease around me
in love with all her kind.

27 I 04

BALM-HEARTED MERCENARIES

of a kindly despot
invade my airspace –
I am rudderless and vague!

They apprehend my distances
and their eyes
decide me.

Exclamation points
in sour classless restaurants
everybody's politics

just change the names
the same conversation
guilty for all times

a sparrowhawk
in the dining room
pouncing on clichés

sometimes I look at my handwriting
and think it has a foreign accent
no country I know about

maybe my Paraguayan
vowels lost in the roar
of the consonant falls.

28 January 2004

WINTER SKIRMISH

remembering Malaparte's
frozen horses
why should a philosopher
also not someday
melt into sleek haunches
and carry loads of wood
or noble equestriennes
trotting through Finnish
woods I volunteer?

28 January 2004

=====

skirmishes, is that what these all are,

the trouble with me is I have no enemies only bad friends

skirmishes, night engagements

or in the thick of dawn

hurrying all my senses

aloud against no enemy?

but there is an enemy unexpressed

in every text, and that fiend is death –

the unseen menace of that enemy

makes every lily haiku

a kind of Iliad.

28 January 2004

WINTER MORNING INSTRUCTIONS

write for a time then recede

let the sastrugi

do the writing for you

god's contours sloped ridge by

ridge in the snow

28 January 2004

BIRD TALK

Among the conspirators the
breathe-together-ers a woodpecker
reminded men of Rome
women of another morning when
for once they were glad to wake alone
that kind of bird neither scimitar
nor sable coat just quietly looking
for some food

 killing is always
an accident for folk like this
survival greedless needs must eat.

The red cap of the Saracens
marks this bird

 black and white
like Feirefiz. Fire face
(lands on a cold branch
and bangs at suet we hung up
till his beak flameless melts it)

myth is never far when a bird is by
sometimes all a college has to do
is listen to them talk and then be wise
let their chatter or their pecking
pick at you and pluck words out
what you wind up thinking
is exactly what they mean to say.

ORGAN GRINDER

then shove the apse in
those chomping teeth
then the nave and tower
till nothing's left
but music in the non
sectarian sky, if
architecture be
theology then
an empty field
is a blueprint of God
and music atheist?

29 January 2004

=====

Now there's sun
in my eyes where
are you you
asked me
about me what
answer could
no one give
you know I'm a book
due back in the library
you never finished
and you you are a long
wooden jetty from
which the boat
has sailed without me
into the prevalent mist.

30 January 2004

=====

But sunlight also is a letting go –
a letter is a poem that says you.

Not a ghazal but something with the bones of us
all the fur gone but it still runs

skeleton of sense across your neighborhood
the arid quarter the dying subway

but life still lurches back to us in things –
a red bird rebukes your melancholy.

30 January 2004

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Can the distances decide?
Can mere peremptory police
unpiece our polity? Etymology.
We are in deep. Who is it says
he's not worried about Germans
bringing Nazism back – they'll come
up with something worse. With us.
The terrible infringements of human
liberty we pay our taxes for.

30 January 2004

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No politics. Stop now
before my ignorant
anger flows. We do not
know. We do not know.
Try for what is permanent.
This Canadian junco far
east of its range. Wild
turkeys like nervous
shrubs moving down the snow.

30 January 2004

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We are not sure what
happened to the miracle
it waited at the siding for
the freight train to slide in
dumped for the weekend.
The unloading. I am fabulous.
Means I can't stop talking.
To you, poor darling, lost
in the shadows between
the plush stuffed penguin and
the espresso machine
where love calls us to
our ultimate surprise,
suburbs of a café, old
backgammon players
euphoniously turk.
Be sure I am your need
for there is no Scotland
like an old shoe, no
camel like a clock.
People gain weight
by the day men play chess
against the timer
spirit is a case of matter
oblique infrequent pure.
Over the crowded tables
an unembodied sort of
baritone whispers French.
So many lingos. A man

reads a book about
cigars. You wait on line
and I'm exhausted
suddenly of so much
to think about now
I am a steeple from
a Catholic church
looking for you
in the shadows where
careful men unpack
vague packages have come
from perhaps too far
yet here they are and
something in the shadows
keeps whispering our names.

31 January 2004

Poughkeepsie