je suis l’inconnu

the unknown bird
you saw on the moors
    white rump umber wings
    and gone before you knew it

how could it be
a flicker
the Swedish word for girl

but here I am again
writing you a letter
the wind will carry
maybe to you maybe
to our common mother
we knew him and loved him, the big one
all arms and legs,

the man in the moon.

12 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
WHY EVER OTHER BE THAN NOW

other is two syllables
the rest of us is one

that tells you something
about the distant weather
across the room
where only eyes can touch

and in between the vast bland Limpopo flows
full of cautious crocodiles
I'll never get there
that's all right

islandmen can never swim
hostages to wet Natura

people in fixes people in traps
gangs hideout
other side of the moon
where they speak bad French

but not so bad as I do,
domino theory
eventually
everybody falls down

my heart in your lap again
your triple syllables
surrounding my poor one
all of you
wickedly other
glossy as sugar cubes

as if a tongue were just to taste and never tell.

13 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
now and again
a last white rose
big fellow
on the beach path
rugosa
they plant themselves
I wish we did
that to ourselves
I wish we
simply knew

and now I remember
we sometime did
we entered this condition
little galley slaves
leaping overboard
in sign of an evidently
unlandlorded island

but once you’ve groveled
once you’ve spent
your sweat in sulfur mines
and once you’ve knelt
patiently waiting your sentence
you grow a taste
for burrowing, for low things
for adoration

as the snake adores the nesting dove.

13 October 2002, Cuttyhunk
THE CHOSEN

There are too many images
to tell
you what I mean
God makes
me choose
one of them
again and again
I see in my mind’s
eye so often
it must be where
the shadow
of truth falls,
my right hand
running quietly
down your flank
you look at me
equally quietly
if that doesn’t tell
what it means
nothing can be told.

13 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
(finished 17 X 02)
SPECIOUS LATITUDES

no one can live here
we are spared
only contradiction
is a bridge
silences rivers
without crossing them
no one has moved
since the beginning
of time tomorrow

you can find us on the map
but there’s nobody home

13 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
Other things worry me
there is a kind of gnawing
at the root
other problems
besides sexual identity
but those have experts of their own
handling them my broker
my dentist my gynecologist
and you beside me in the wilderness
a joke you know the poem
I want to fuck them back
that’s what I think about
no matter what I say or do
when I’m with them
I want to rip them open with my hips
hammer them the way they hammer me
so those two things are happening together
the body moves and the mind’s reciprocal
and when I come I hardly notice
what he’s doing to me I’m so focused
on what I do to him, plunging and being
plunged at once, otherwise I couldn’t bear it
but as it is I’m nice enough in bed
even docile sometimes smug around my secret
so naturally I dream of screwing you too
how could I not if I feel attracted
or even interested and that way also
I don’t have to look at their faces
and I love to fuck experts like you
because of how armored your bodies are
with fat or muscle it doesn’t matter
armored and rigid with self-protection
I guess you have to, you’re with lunatics all day
but there’s a special pleasure to crack you open
drive into that touch scared meat of them
and split them open with my phantom phallus
slow rise and fall of all their conversation
and I pass my body through them through all their words
the sad beautiful language of Eden
when all my lovers and attempted lovers and ex-lovers
think the words they mumble describe real actions
think that talking changes anything
think that truth is in their reach
like the scarlet poison oleander sacred flower
when all that happens is my body
drives through their bodies drive through mine
o god if I could only reach you
and you could know me
knowing you, knowing you all the way through
so a word could be
sacred as the mouth that speaks it
against my ear, wet on my cheek
in the bushes by the country station
when I overhear the foolish plans of travelers
who think there is a going and a coming
something to be done and a report to be made
the sad sweet destiny of talking men
in a universe where no one listens
of course language changes nothing
of course you’re sick as your patients
but you comfort and lighten a little
the long burden of seeming to be someone
it doesn’t help but it helps
it doesn’t answer
but it keeps talking
its ears are deaf but its eyes are tender
it almost has no body left
only the sense of caring cares
the sense of being heard finally hears
I could talk to you forever
a dream about a dream about a dream.

13 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
ORGANDY

To call out in such a way I think you hear
my curtains billowing with sleep
so that at least we’d get to listen
sitting among the ashes on the sofa
answering the young man from Russia
and the other one born of opportunity and Ethiopia
bronze with scandal

there is so much listening to be done
and only me it seems to do it
everybody else so busy with inventions
such a haughty thing to say
I do not regret it, au contraire,
bring me all your daughters –

I am the authority on everlasting,
the book of Babel
deftly translated
into every human touch
there beside you when you wake
dreaming of towers that talk to you
soft towers drowsy on the plain.

13 October 2002
In Kafka’s Penal Colony
the accurate machine
finally convinces the body, that least
persuadable of all our members.
Write it on the skin the heart will copy.

13 October 2002
SONGS FOR ABRAM

1.
Sarah in my arms
I look down the slope of her back
to see what she’s been writing
I squeeze her void
loins and wonder
thousands of years

2.
a little shame
a little answer
she blushes easy
my eyes too
seeing her

3.
Sarah, turning Sarah red
tanning her hide
to take her in
probing her
to find the desert in her
in all her lush
fertility to find
the unfruitful the cold

water is a stone
to know her backwards
breeding orphan Ishmael.

13 October 2002, Cuttyhunk
THE METHOD

say more about everything
and leave room

what more can Sophocles
do or Racine

be beautiful
and lie in wait

till the word
understands you

13 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
THE RED KINGDOM

constitutional anarchy
be beloved go ahead
spiritual disciplines
mortification of the flesh
who asks for wine
let her eat bread

be kneaded in the trough of night
spill something on the sky
turns out to be dawn

but who?
and after all he did to you
can you remember his name?

13 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
LODI-BACKWARDS HOLINESS

it dreamed. reading of Islam
thinking California, everything
flows back to beast desire

hands on haunch, a bite
to test reality, this soft gold
know this coin by rapture

then spend it till you’re kind
only after seizure harvest home
and this a star, our staunch gate.

14 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
MINUIT RAPTURE

the airlines personnel suddenly personal
the phone call that actually calls

you will be coming to see me and
Kafka stumbles on his shoelace

the sun rolls down the hill
for a week I’ve dreamed my hand

steady on the shape of you
like a conquistador of geometry

Coronado of the hidden flesh
safe in the future

dreams take me there
but waking stays me.

14 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
Le savant sachant
less than he knows
whereas the thinking man
knows more than suppose.

14 X 02, Cuttyhunk
PRATERSTERN

But that’s the problem
let me tell you
what can I do
you are my last doctor
the last one I want to be in love with

eternal flame Tomb of the Unknown Other
under the Arch of Will
where identity begins

we know cities only through each other

we turn our backs on the Giant Wheel
and hurry past the Admiral’s statue
up her dark stairs

children learning Russian in the hall
and she took me into a room with no windows
with a gold cross on the wall

gilded wood
in the light of the door

the difference between thinking and feeling is who.

14 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
Call back from Rumi the sense that man I love
loves me in a comparable

  singularity

  physics of the thing, tumescent waking
old fascist morning glory the blue sky
with that glorioso sun

  generalissimo of the sky
barking be happy be happy down on us

but because we are who we are
we really love better in the dark..

14 October 2002
Cuttyhunk
VERJUICE

wine of the Sabbath
becomes the redeeming blood
only by way of the sour wine
sopping the sponge they
lifted to him on the cross

otherwise wine is wine
and we wake from it sober and alone.

14 October 2002
Cuttyhunk