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BALZAC

**rises naked from his dream
and summons his robe**

**heavy heavy camel wool
but lined in silk**

**it flutters to him weightily
flapping from across the room**

**an Arab trick he learned
from some old book he wrote**

**he climbs into it slowly
it smells of yesterday**

**I will wear it all day long
until it smells like now**

**and words rise up like dust
from the embattled wool.**

25 November 2014

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**But if they waited for me
they'd still be waiting
the waters of that Egyptian lake
would still be pure
untroubled by the reflections
of ascetic faces peering in
to see beyond themselves
the simple fact of what there is.**

**They didn't wait. They built
palazzos and economies,
rode horses and murdered goats
until they needed religion
to make them feel half-decent
again, and they could label
all their pleasures sinful
and do them on the sly.**

**I would have kept the waters clear,
done it all by words, all
talk and no action, and the soul rejoice.**

25 November 2014

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**I will never go back inside again
he prayed, stone womb or woman.
Ever. So hard to be and not go back.
They call it home but holds a tomb.
Leave something of myself inside
no never. Devil burning autumn leaves.**

25 November 2014

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**I'm going downstairs.
I'm going down the stairs
and the stairs keep going
down, I keep going down,
stiff right leg first, nimble
left after, step after step
going down. My hand
on the banister is cold,
the stairs keep going down,
after a time I begin worrying,
how far down do these
steps lead, how far is down
in my own house, is it
my house, doesn't it belong
to its wood and its shade,
the old wood, deep shadow
on the stairs, creak of wood,
how far must I go to reach
the beginning, my ordinary
house, floor, life? The stairs
keep going down. All I know
now is going down, the light
never changes, the steps go on.**

25 November 2014

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**The gathered ones
around the deathbed
are the source of
the over-nature hum
of thoughts in all
their minds: grown
intense by interacting
the reverberations
of all their feelings
into one same will.
They make the heaven
into which the dying
man expands. Out,
always out into that
permanent within.**

25 November 2014

MASHA'S DREAM NOVEMBERED

dlya Mashi

**four minutes of
being inside
someone**

**starting with the interior chambers of the piano
(house of the Beast to which Beauty penetrates
consciously daring the seminal mistake)**

**4 minutes or
as if someone sleeping touches someone,
someone else who is sleeping
and there are no dreams--
what is remembered?**

**Every action leaves a residue.
but where is it kept?
So many histories are stored in sound.
Low notes of a reed instrument.
Wind blowing from Atlantis
which is what white people call West Africa,
Aphrica, where the sun knows
how to make music thank
god we can't actually hear.**

25 November 2014

From Masha's *Chopin Backwards / Seven Clarinets Dream Piece*)

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**What would it be like
not to remember a lilac**

**or to walk for the first time
on a street with people**

**or close my own eyes
and open in another's face**

**see what they see
for the first time alone?**

**It is warm but not very close,
articulate but silent.**

**I have tried for it too long—
now it is time for time**

to do the dance only it can do.

25 November 2014

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**The worrisome the wonder
the pyramid aria from *Jesus in Egypt*,
try, harder, but snow keeps falling
we smile at things we don't understand
all the words I really know
could be written on one page
if anyone could know them there for me
onto the inscrutable blank
an old word just means white.**

26 November 2014

WINTER NIGHT

**Could these linger?
Lights out over the county
the sheen of snow makes
what light there is.**

**Snow fault. Mercy
of every ease, holiday
complex'd outage,
outrage, we remember**

**ourselves in darkness,
if only I could be
what I believe,
could take my stand**

**as a sort of human
being is bent on becoming—
saint or sage or
a friend in the dark.**

26 November 2014

LATER

Later, when the light comes home
singing Irish songs it learned in the deep woods
(when the Irish chopped their own woods down
their trees came here, you can hear their Gaelic
when the wind blows, they prosper far from use)
later, when the door learns its old tricks again
and the blue flames twirl on the gas range,
warm kitchen, steamed window, later
when the baby grows up suddenly
and preaches from the dining room chair
difficult gospels we almost manage to believe,
later, when we've all but forgotten
all we think we know now, and pass
glasses of warm milk around the room,
with sugar in it and a crush of cardamom
to make bad dreams end well, later
when the sun finally relents and rises
and we discover a newspaper on the porch
in another language! another city! another war!
then we can fold our hands and smile
and spend all morning trying to remember.

26 November 2014

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**To be particular
is to be in parts
or trusting parts
will form a whole.**

**To be particular
is a kind of faith,
a religion of school-
masters and courtesans,**

**to know each entity
without its world
it lives in and gives
life to just by being**

more than what it is.

26 November 2014

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**Appropriate to write with inkless pen
power outage general in the town
all systems compromised.**

**The snow is beautiful.
The Beautiful Contradictions by Nathaniel Tarn
is the best book title ever, something to envy
in its sprightly exactitude.**

**And the trees are lace
with it all and the generator roars,
warm radiators. Poetry mostly happens inside
but talks big about mountains and oceans,
poets hunched over tables like Dadaists at prayer.**

27 November 2014

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**The trees
all dressed
for their first
communion,
white carpet
laid out for them
to hide their big feet.
But where
is the priest?**

27.XI.14

= = = = =

**“No priest but the perfected man”
she said, edging us towards the door
she opened wide to display
a harmless land,
scalable mountain range in clear sky
a peak for everyone.**

27 November 2014

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**Lift the sky higher
I still can reach the moon.**

27.XI.14

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**Departures not easy
standing room only on trains,
flights cancelled, conversation
guided by the weather.**

**It's the real again,
that lurid thing—
bus marooned in snow drift,
some angel with a radio
torments us with music.**

**You call that a metaphor?
When something looks like
something else, call the police.
Resemblance is fatal.**

27 November 2014

HOLD TO THE WRONG SIDE

**captions under enigmas
make the matter denser—**

**a sky full of crows
over Poughkeepsie**

**we know the worst
tomato juice and mayonnaise**

**sweet old America
bore you to death with bonhomie.**

27 November 2014

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**Imagining it is the same
as a waterfall, say
the tall slender maiden
tourists worship in Yosemite—**

**maiden, *digo*, not bride,
nothing like a bride,
there is no marrying
no giving in marriage
here where the woman
rock of earth overmasters
all your skies. I stood
on the parapet, marveled
that I was permitted
inside this cosmology
as witness and friend.**

**Dry rock swift water
completed me — a man
who has stood in that spot
will never be the same.**

27 November 2014

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**Encountering the self in the desert
there is greeting to be done, *khaire*,
one says, old greek for hello
thinking I'll remember me from long before,
or *khairate* maybe better, plural, for all
the selves I've been ere now, as poets say,
though Shelley said all this more gravely
in *Prometheus*, to meet oneself strolling
in the garden. And are there two of me
and why would any care, who have more
than enough to do to come with only one
let alone the myriad mes strolling there
disguised as ferns and garter snakes and
that sad broken column was a sundial once.**

28 November 2014

KEYBOARD

**My breath is longer
animal machine
we share a shove
to make more**

**under my hands
my words breathe out
unimaginably accurate
fooling no one**

“no more than before.”

28 November 2014

= = = = =

**such a delicate mistake
to lift the shade and see
the out there (snow-laced
bare linden, maple, ash)
looking so much like inside,
the neural pathways of
this half-wit mind. The tracks
of speech, the long snaking
traces of feeling, ricochet
of fond desire, prayers sprayed
and frozen as they spoke.
I am winter too, fallen
on a glamorous earth, a dark
dull punctuation mark upon
the unending sentence of just so.**

28 November 2014

WINTER AFTERNOON

**To catch the light
before it migrates
to another sky
and leaves the trees
empty as poetry.**

28 November 2014

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**It wanted to sleep
not to worry about
its straying flocks
or the weather
ever. It was me.
There was a strange
scent in the air,
Parc Monceau, its
wife's new perfume.
Parfum. Sommeil.**

28 November 2014