

THE EQUALIZER

1.13

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HENRY GOULD [308] *Lanthanum 4*

LANTHANUM 4

1

Late summer evening, pensive September light.
 Persistent mute suspended minor seventh
 of distant railroad horn. *Amaranth*,
goldenrod. The pussy willow (plucked, worn out).

Autumn is a labyrinth of earthy dreams.
 Of prairie earth, grown vaster than the sea.
 & Henry huddles with his traveling three—
 Hobo, Roger, William B.—where the beams

of his wind-wagon meet the mast (pining).
 In the cradle of his longing, the log cabin
 of his ghost brought low. Some Sinbad
 marathon, spun by Scheherazade (declining

favours—still, persuasive). Here, a ruddy
 Irish monarch—there, an Armenian butterfly.
 The tale spins by itself, unstoppable top. Why?
It's gravity, at the edge of the bloody

corner, mate. Checkmate. Crossroads.
 Where husk of Siberian cicada meets
 the tracks, & Theseus blunders blind toward
 Chartres . . . where Berryman hears Beethoven-chords.

Track 132. The jittery greenhouse overhead
 like a turtle-shell, translucent . . . where are we?
 Petersburg? Coutances? Minneapolis? Saint
 Louee? *We're near the Queen of the dead*

bees, the phantom said. *Henry's Dove*
Inn (Chicago watercolor—gray, with loops).
 The bird purrs in the railroad trumpet—whoops
 —*'at's the spirit.* & this was only Ariadne's Cove.

9.20.09

2

The crossweave in the melancholy train-chord,
 plangent, distant. Not unison yet, but the one
 and the other, making harmony. The oval
 red and green leaves of a shuttering dogwood—

one color with the other, calmly aglow now
 beneath gray clouds. The curious heart-
 signals sleepy Henry tries to interpret—
 sign-language, leaf-muttering, slow

autumn breeze . . . the one and the other—
 old question-and-answer, call-and-response . . .
 Martha and Mary, Williams and Blackstone,
 listening, doing. Knot of the dreamer

by rose-flecked seashore. Twine of Black Sea
 binding Maximus, his hardy, rooted taking-stock
 before the *Mother of Good Maiden Voyages*
 (almond prow on New World promontory

—strife-torn turf). The total vision
 a triangulation—compass, rudder, mast
 afloat upon a void of whispered trust—
 still star above wind-wagon ballast (son

and mother and their Magdalen-*logos*).
 The old design whispers to Henry, he gets
 the drift of dogwood leaves. His Hobo waits
 in river-sand, by a railway bridge, a drifter's

flute-call smoking from his lips. A tuning-
 fork in the middle of the country surges
 its upward wing; anonymous Pocahontas
 reels around, with a rock in her sling.

9.23.09



With a rock in her sling, Pocahontas reels
around . . . is it studious Blackstone, shrouded
in his papery cocoon, his womb-cloud,
raining? And she, the root of all he feels,

the knotty stump, the remnant scrawled all
over with riddles . . . hoary grandmother of
once-wispy willow? Minor mirroring, by river?
Henry plucks the cat-string of his guttural

personae (unappeased, rambunctious
Mousketeers). *Adieu*-longing (that stems
from, ends among ice-locked limestone,
russet railroad bridges) shades his soliloquies,

bends his yew longbow (odd oud). Meanwhile
mind-power of Maximus, in Byzantium
(the other Maximus) cradles the frame
of gopherwood, where Black Sea water riles

around Pontus-point; finds scarlet Rahab-
thread, that can untie, make plain, defend
the knot of human and divine enfoldment
(*sans désordre*)—what riddle more subtle,

troubling? His spirit lingers near that fortress
at the other end of the remorseless depths
where Theseus manarvels fleece (the labyrinth
will reel him back from Ariadne's wilder nest)—

asking again : *who reigns in the almond eye?*
The mirrored sun plays like a wistful child
in the rocking sea that girdles triste Istanbul.
A land-bound willow wavers between river, sky.

9.24.09

That Finnish carpenter, arch arc-welder, will he
 ever be finished? & will some beehive grow
 out of this footling litterbox, Henry's heave-ho
abbatoir—his slow spiel, his scribbly spelling-bee?

His lean-to stand-ins gather round, his fogged-in
 foretop shrouding a flighty figurehead (always
 one step ahead). Forthright RW, wise
 William B. . . . wistful Hobo lingering astern.

Blackstone lifts a glass toward Byzantium.
 He wants a rose window to shade his apple-
 tree—layers of honeyed, leaded light (triple-
 dense, Einstein-slow)—a palimpsest. Viridium-

lanthanum-oxide (caffeinated blend). Something
 St. Louis might underwrite (if Queen B. signs on).
 A lofted boomerang (earthbound, into the sun)
 —high-wired for mobile stable (free-floating).

& there, from beyond the effaced curvature
 of sea-wave domes, from that poisoned bowl
 of empurpled shade—a microscopic smile,
 bent by parallax ray into toadstool square

(dour prophet-frown, immured in martyr-salt).
 The angle of his rippling white beard, acute
 as his one remaining eye—his humming note
 (in surprising major key) only : *what Walt*

intuited—Whitman. How the miracle of many-
 in-one (*e pluribus unum*)—its kindly singleness—
 disintegrated, disinterred again—arose to bless,
 in person, every one. *Rose, once—arose, Henry!*

9.28.09

Abstract, abstracted Henry ambles west
 across a limestone-lit & pastel Providence.
 Steep ridges, baby rivers. Confluence
 of morning stone & wooden birdnest

paradise. Past Burnside Park, with marble
 General. & gray-beard homeless private
 shaking out his shoes (still alive, yet).
 RW from below—his steep immobile

terrace of Inca-set granite (Isaac Hale's
 deed—filigreed now in hungry graffiti).
 Where his ashes lie—burnt from the tree-
 root man-shape swelling his coffin (awhile

back then). To moss-gray, helmet-headed
 City Hall (where angular Roger-face peeks
 from its crown) he goes, to pay late taxes . . .
 ambles east again. Earth trek she threaded,

once—absent, absented one. Just one,
 just once. & Henry felt the L-bow of an arm
 hooked into his own, laced, latched. To form
 a knot with lurching outline, barely shaded-in—

irregular, in disequilibrium. Systole, diastole . . .
 sys . . . black stone on white stone—breathing
 lips & windy guest. So her road-dislocating
 presence lessoned less & less. Yet twas whole

Somewho. Beyond departure. In the realm
 of the matrix of subtle analogies of light (rays
 hula-hope through rainbow-eyelet). How they
 recast your one & lonely profile, Yo-Yo? Hmm?

9.28.09

O, & that train-horn's plangent testament . . .
 a yawning in the basement of its chord.
 Suspended between iron tracks—echoed
 by time, space, homesickness. O, Henry's

foolish fundament. Concave to complex . . .
 the womb of fading notes, where we played
 hide-&-seek (you, me, brother Bluejay—
 a winsome foursome). Into the dome's *ex-*

cathedra doom (only air & light, afloat
 on high). & it's not the beautiful Madonna
 with chambered sea-blue glance of *tesserae*,
 nor the blunt cruelties of Will-to-Dominate

there . . . only the geometry of yearning
 (Ariadne). Only turn the rosewood handle
 90 degrees—until the humiliated sundial-
 pinetree lifts to the pole star (ice, burning).

So a bent polarity's natural desire for beauty
 leans toward recognition. Supernatural charity—
 the childhood of the soul in God—a hobo liberty
 bestowed in 2nd berth (long whistle-wail) . . . O my

Siberious hilaritas, *Yurodivy*! This your
 early birch-tree cry—a sap with honey!
 This our business—O, Eternity! Eternity!
 Whose pigeon sails past Bosphorus, Marmara . . .

These implications of Great Northern routes—
 when the tree & the forest, the frost
 & its each miniature fir-whorl, herringbone &
 firmly cleave. Toward one vermilion threadlight.

9.29.09

The dogwood leaves fold inward, recapitulate
 their early greenery, in threadbare spines
 of old maroon. The book of *Henry's*
Travels (lazily rafted with his playmate,

Minstrel Minister—big J). From Minnesota.
 Prospecting like a tucked-in Finn, ship-bottled
 in the volume of himself. Rain shuttles
 through October's dangled tails (uncountable

quota). This mottled season is in unison
 with the mumbled limitations of his song.
 Untranslatable clicks & whistles, overlong
 grackle-hubbub, veering south . . . *someone*

must save that Henry from himself! Suspended
 railroad-hoot (through distance, river-flow)
 transposes into minor key; you hear the low
 tootle of mourning dove, close to the ground

(*again, again*) . . . & the two of them together
 (stark brass of train-trombone,
 woodwind of rainbow-throat) command
retreat, retreat . . . back to the tether

of love's strange Nowhere—its circled square;
 back to the genesis of each desire
 in the quick yearning of an infant choir
 (impatient sparrows, bunkered in despair

of dawn). & testaments of buried men,
 & reveille for Berryman, blend in marine
 vertex (or submarine)—serene
 blueprint from Finnish ark (catamaran).

10.3.09

Hobo's ghost (Henry) tracks a negative way.
Don't you be like them, sonny. Of self-
 dispersal, man to river-clay. & feels
 achy, maybe. O his achy, creaky, drafty

craft! Heads where rivers merge, to plant
 a seal (*MRG*) in the bowl of the bottomland.
 Near old St. Louee. Whatever comes to hand
 goes to float that thing—rubbish, newsprint . . .

& he never learns (as Blackstone learns)
 how to subtract negative from zero—or
 to limn how love's lodestone (the mighty O
 in All itself) draws him in four dimensions

(threads). He doesn't need to learn, or speak;
 he senses it. That's why he's lying on the river-
 bank, dozing (as eddies drift, leaf, quiver) . . .
 (& *why he'll never amount to squat*, sez Zeke.)

The train-horn hoots again, like *Lastest Trumpet*
 or Henry's yearnful dove, disguised as owl.
 To the point that Hobo never will follow
 (dim soul) : beyond his own draining sunset.

He feels it, though. He feels. He'll never know.
 While Blackstone quarries Maximus to find
 his formula's hobo-equation (*fair, kind,*
true . . .)—Henry leads them into signet-snow.

Where he pried loose an agate once, one summer.
 Earth-brown, to camouflage itself—at home
 (a pleasant peasant spider-thread, flesh-
 toned with light)—a circular dance-mummer's

gesture. Inimitable, unlikely wave
 goodbye—from the bridge of aspirations
 (wishing bones). From chest, near station
 of trained brooder. Hums there. Wave, wave.

10.5.09

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The steel prong at the center of the earth
in Henry's dream—coral coracle in the midst
of bobbing painted horses. Its double mast
lifting into one sail, its striding girth

only bright air, vertigo—a spiritual gate
flared high over vernal mound (effaced,
blood-spotted, green). Beneath terraces
of avid gophers (wind-polished, fibrillate,

ephemeral). Dream-lattice, easily
unhinged, undone. Yet the little tree
where the dreams began seems ringed
for me, just for me : a standing melody.

So pity the tired and tremulous old boy
in bleak recovery glare (of smarting snow,
intrusive stares)—your dancing shadow
on a shaken stick, your would-be Irishman;

here in such squalor's where the spirit greets
the real (his skeletal embrace, closer to fire)—
here's where the pipsqueak of a threadbare Eire
soars like Wisdom's Ariadne, fleet to fleet.

The sign of an arch-shade in my muttering
(full of air and emptiness and rain) is
homecoming, is pointing home. Homer's
oar was always there, amidships, staggering

toward life; the calm world is grace
for harrowed soil, for stolid earth.
Black river-clay, old bottomland—berth
for a hurricane (filled with time and space).

10.6.09

The way the lines of a canoe meet at the prow
& drag its wake into the shifty stream . . .
so the coiled magnetic Dream
inched toward its heart (Meanderthal crow)

& etched a compass rose in sunburnt iron.
Ev'man's, Ev'woman's. Common wheel
it is—from whence we make way, reel,
sway . . . (wobbly vinyl, nasal violin).

That figure up ahead in riffing wind—
whorled seed of one acute beak-vertex
(drawn from fiddlehead stump—like Ex
from welded, wedded stone). Tomorrow's

tamarack, no doubt. Away up north.
She's somewhere, man. Someone. Somehow.
Dancing on the *parallelorim* of Orion (cold
fire, through & through). Near Duluth—

with luthier, methinks. Fiddling around.
A round. & haunts us (as she pokes
through spokes) like a folksong
from a screech-owl (Appalachian

sound). Wisdom's feathery *whiz*
across branches (somber, green)
with carrier's premise (has-been,
will be). Mourning, morning. Is.

& the gate, a gate, of winding tree-
rings, singing. Leaves, sets out, from
cornice of stone pier . . . & the plumb
sounds—blares (her owl-hoot harmony).

10.7.09

The traveling circus of October grackles
 swings into town, with happy hectic whoops &
 whistles over Henry's head—in the faded circle
 (roseate rust) of dogwood branches. Chuckles

& wheeling, swerving hoots are hooped in heaps up
 there, as a company of leaves swishes its surf-like
 undertone. & Henry fades himself (old tyke)
 into his Middle Ages, & beyond . . . sleeps &

drowzes in his mazy dream (uncharted Chartres
 hovering like heavy honey—like an alien ship
 over the corny heartland). Unexpressive sap
 from inexpressible brainstem-tree . . . heart's

labyrinthine amaranth (almond conundrum). &
 the last turn comes at the center of the winding,
 windy rose—implicate with grief, & knowing
 melancholy wastelands (prodigal Hobo-time)—

turning through the winged circus-sounds toward
 cloud-shrouded, ripened sun – its ruddy light. &
 so this bent fat stiff of an aging Hal—his sight
 grown dim—turns out all right (*grace be to God*);

his edifying dream of midway arch proves
 apple-laden (Blackstone-honeycomb—golden,
 sweet). For the storm-taut ribs of a mandorla-
 canoe rest upright, grounded, still—where wind

moves through clear space : heart's absolute
 zero, bull's-eye source : almond keystone (*rhodos-*
lanthanum, pink with dawn). On pendulous *logos-*
wing . . . Vermeer's milkweed monarch (*maudit*).

10.10.09

As the tremulous old king crawls ruefully toward his
 Jerusalem crib, the young prince sets out
 on his firefly charge (sans script). & is that
 egret-eremite all set (or preterite)? *Readiness*

is all, he murmurs (all walled-in). *By the four*
points of my compass-cocoon, by the bark
of my Lincoln-log pontoon (sounding at quark-
 range) . . . A winking prairie-schooner pair

of constellations (*Big Bear, Wee Bear*) fords
 the Polaris Theater. In April (thursday
 or friday, around noon. Near Milky Way).
 The baby mosaic canoe made of little stones

on board, Memphis settles into its Mississippi
 regime—booze in the morning, bees
 in the afternoon (little lead BBs).
 & flies on home—in the chariot (fiery

father). *Hallelujah!* So it was
 with winebibbers of old—like Maximus,
 with his hand chopped off, tongue
 torn out (for announcing the omnibus

sit-down human-garbage-mankind strike).
Everyman's the sloop of shame-&
tacking-home-again, he sings—*since*
Noah sent the dove adrift toward Pike's

Peak (arid zone, you tar). Since you left
 home yourself, Henry—following Falstaff
 into his flagship company. Quaff, then,
 another, regal bumblebee! All draft-age now.

10.11.09

The architecture Henry can't explain, that is
his joy & consolation every day (conceptual
October sunshine—pale, passible, yet still
there). Like these deepening plum colors

in the descending dogwood leaves—it is
a shade of general rose; as the various shades
merge in a spectrum of clear water-blades
in that city of lakes where Berryman resuscitates

& is himself again, & feeling better about things.
Or as the magnetic attraction of the dusty iron
sketches its mandorla-door, unstoppably—spun
from sleep toward your own unlooked-for springs.

So the form of flute-sound over the heart-void
entrains itself into a fan of harmonies. A scale-
wheel of diminished fifths—purple organ-peals'
surfacing rhumb-bob of the universe—enjoined

in solo heart-burst (single voice & chordal bass).
& then the hobo-rail peels off . . . around the bend.
Making tracks. Into that spacious empty land
& sky. Vanishing (infinity unveils its face).

So he pursues her, anonymous, into rose's
spectral folds. Drawn from desire toward
innocent joy—that otherworld of renewed
childhood (private in an unknown soldier's

infancy). Where many & one become
a theme with variations, at the apex
of their milky curve (simple, complex)—&
where the rose is rooted in its flower-kingdom.

10.12.09

Hobo, buried in leaf-drift, late October
assumes the anonymous lineaments
of Everyman. His waxy cerements
are dogwood leaves. Each red-veined oar

folded in windblown fleets of Achaian galleys
is warped across a train-horn's major C
(simple shofar-call) . . . tenderly,
tenderly travels through the gleaning breeze

of Indian summer. Rudderless incarnation
of all waywardness. The wavering wake
of that warning trumpet will not break
his dream, his prodigal oblation.

The sleepy soul slips into masquerade
(medieval clown) at harvest-time. Loosens
the railroad ties, removes the rusty iron
armature, its cross-woven bridgework

of militant need—shifting, swaying, distending
into seedy player's weeds—a pumpkin field
of bulbous, over-ripened suns (moist yield
of drowsy memory, earth-whispering).

Gray clouds of whistling starlings wheel
beneath white bands in the stratosphere.
The absent carrier pigeon will not appear
(brooding, signaling) at the apex of the real

this time of year—rather, as an ember
glowing in the hobo-fire, where lost farmers
gather. Lost tribes, lost lands . . . wherever
disoriented pilgrim sails inch into November.

10.22.09

Something smolders deep in Blackstone's heart,
beyond sight, beyond hearing, like a lodestone
of stubborn coal. Reflected in his lone
& wakeful candle; & in the Narragansett

campfire, circled by a band of firelit eyes &
faces etched into the trees (nocturnal
Hagia Sophia's woodburnt cenacle).
Love that would frame in Celtic filigree

& bind in mordant Roman bronze, the seal
of his homing devotion (pensive, pregnant, in
suspense, as in the hum before the hurricane);
love spun far into wilderness, beyond repeal.

One tall holm-oak, the mast of his sunship,
the pivot of his equilibrium—
tether for his bull's-eye seraphim.
E'n la sua volontade . . . (peaceable playscript).

For the stars are everywhere the same
& shine for homecoming by seething kelson,
cross-braced breeze; that monk's last lesson
(folding nature on the curving seam

of grace) a grant, charted for our thanksgiving;
& in the bloodstained testimony, scrolled
perpetually in desert hives—behold
the finish line (green, serpentine & ringed

with flame). & as an unknown soldier steps
through molten Circus Maximus, one local
soul clinches its focal point—mandorla
splayed in agate hand (its rosy depths).

10.23.09

As Halloween draws near, & the phoenix trees
blossom & preen again, like smithery birds,
Henry gathers up his masks (his belabored
pseudonyms) & heads for the river. He's

just a mask himself, now—silky projectile
of shriveled Florida palm (immured way
up north, in Resurrection snow). Just a Player
King, on a huckster's raft, on a backward Nile—

cocooned monarch on Romany funeral barge;
led by the nose, by the prow, by the melody
of railroad flute (a rod of iron). *Body &*
Soul. Toward some theological *ménage*

à trois Maximus sketched out (with an ink-
feathered stump). & Roger lived to praise
& sing—Williams, *RW*, our double-play
sidewinder, he—of Rhody *can-do* (sink-or-

swim). Depression-era, rigid chap—striding
off the Terrace, bus-sheltered by granite
arch . . . yea, the figure in the magnet-
bend! Im-mediator of colliding

turbine-turbulence—two violent worlds
of rabid allegiance, cynical insolence
(odd Eden, impaired)—lifting violet fence
of *soul freedom*, between those fright-hurled

certitude-polarities. Between earth
and sky. On Prospect Street, in Providence,
there is an agèd wrought-iron fence, whose
gravid elegance grounds all my mirth-

inducing solo loops (improvident
improvisation)—like the milky breast or
dome of myriad almond (sunbeam) lenses;
the bend of one Mississippian prong-trident.

10.27.09

○.....○

. . . yet the meanings of October 28, 1965 continue to radiate
 – W. A. Mehrhoff, *The Gateway Arch : Fact and Symbol*

We've surfed so far through this festal gloom.
 We've journeyed a certain way from Milk Street
 & the grey slate wings of the parish *Paraclete*
 under the rain (arrayed in black-gold rime

of mountain ash). *Sursum corda*, sounds
 the bronze bell. The bronze bell (lifted up
 like a voluble serpent). Near train-stop
 in pre-dawn Siberia (way station to mounds

of skulls . . . symphonic *Day of the Dead*).
Sursum corda. Lifted up like a cruel 44
 in Memphis (inscaped, unescaped martyr's
 hour) below the strong brown stream (head

Janus-janitor, draining the wounded woods).
*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; & be ye lift
 up, ye everlasting doors; & the King of glory
 shall come in. Sursum corda.* Here stood

th'embottled farmer-gardener, misunderstood.
 Misrecognized. *Sursum corda*. Where a ghost
 looms in the denuded limbs (O *Lord of hosts*)
 like the hollow hoot of a phantom railroad.

& so for 40 days & nights the flood rose
 in the mouth of the throat of the gorge
 of the ring-dove. & the surge
 of the wave & the rainbow-haze

curved over the gate that was lifted up
 like the line of a length of a labyrinth (or
 edge of spark-wrung rose). Cradle me then
 strange coracle my almond, Argus-eyed shallop

10.28.09

○ ○

Walk through the twilight street toward Halloween.
Through twilight light. The starlight, *everywhere*
the same—its Einstein-constancy the measure
of a cosmic farmhouse (flame-bright, keen).

A pumpkin-light, a lantern glance, hearth-warm.
Tall Pumpkin Man ambles our twilight streets,
a node of light, a hill of flickering; fond Chartres
rose, *Blanche Ochre-Russe*, on lightweight arm

the two together make a heartfelt form (dim
shades like folded flying buttresses, tucked
wings)—flame-orange origami-construct, or
Romany barge (‘mid scalloped shallop-swarm)

bound for candled Jordan-pond (familiar
constellation . . . nuptial night, or Jubilee).
& these are magic lantern slides of you
& me, merely (children, draw nigh . . .)—

from the crown of the brow to the feet
of each soul, Everywoman and Man a temple
of God, whispers Holy Church, murmurs simple
Maggie—*each one an End of History*, complete

node of correlating beams of light (& *the*
centuries surround me with fire, the soldier
sighed—hum-drum pebble on the shore).
As masqueraders cluster by the wooden

garden gate, creaking in soft reply (upon
its well-worn hinge) to the muttering wind
I am the door of the sheep, at river’s end
the lifeboat gently bumps its moored crown.

10.29.09

A desolate mind sailing through desolate space
 above a desolate heart, Henry ekes his way
 into November. All Souls' Day. Deep clay,
 meanwhile, logs its transmissions (lateral

passes, shifting scales . . . a skittering grace).
& the end is always near, scrapes the fiddling
 dogwood leaf—one bare North Star's his riddling
 light-equation's standing proof (streaming millrace).

Everywhere the same. Light the middling
 mean, all-penetrant . . . & what is this light?
 Henry wears his testimony (ermine eremite)
 weaseled into bookish office—his piddling,

flimsy prophet's reed—out of the substance
 of his kin & kind, worn out, long-suffering.
 Yet wear it he must, it is his witnessing—
 out of stark void, quaint remonstrance

of battering faith. It rhymes with what he knows
 (a widow's mite) of memory : long heart-lease,
 tendered to the bankruptcy of time (a dream-
 disease). Where (after Elijah) Elisha goes—

into the cloud of lightning-glory (track
 of all the forerunners on up ahead, lighting
 his way). Lanthanum road, of faltering
 enunciation . . . Gloucester-sight-gone-black.

Exactly there, in the Star Chamber's cranium
 of emptiness . . . the North Pole still shines.
 Not Henry's to trace, these converging lines—
 Noman's—very woman very man's. Light-home.

11.1.09

The monarch's flown southwest to Mexico
 & left behind his colors in the trees;
 milkweed Melchizedek, anonymous, he's
 only a memory now (from long ago).

The golden-barren limbs lift a craggy vault
 like some forlorn cathedral, shivering
 with leaf-news—*the monarch is leaving,*
now . . . the monarch departs . . . Ochre, cobalt,

a taste of iron; threads of scarlet & purple
 interlaced within a labyrinth of rose. So
 eerie the soaring gossamer—already zero
 gravity (& gone), winging 'twixt twin steeple

prongs (antennae, signalling). . . Threads
 of a moth-trail, designedly draped across
 the Milky Way (*the way he went*), emboss
 a furtive coign of vantage – Magellanic Cloud

of witnesses—O starry Wisdom's dancing
 majesty! & *joy rides in stupendous coverings—*
 Thou ridest, Monarch-Hurricane!—thy tidings
 tolled through tongs of railroad tunes, attunings—

crossed beyond vast milkweed prairies, where
 the chosen children of one stutter-clear & loco
 vocable—scarred *logos*-Lincolns (Martins, too)
 enunciate, halting, thy rose-enfurlèd, plowshare

silo-smile (deep granary of everlasting victory);
 & where thy sevenfold unfoldment once began
 sails back again, 77-fold—prodigal origami span
 of one entwining grain-bin grin (tall—57 stories!).

11.2.09

The wide river, and the wide prairie,
 the wistful train-hoot carried on the wind.
 Hobo, on the old Soo Line; his fiery friend
 Pumpkin Man, all black & orange . . . *whee!*—

skimming down Heartbreak Trail, toward
 Way-Off. Monarchs of mudflats, kings
 of milk—their infant, roustabout, mulish
 speech rebounds to lowland Indian mound

(breast-work of Pocahontas) half-buried now
 in shuttling river-clay. It is the almond Word
 a-lit—bedded in the wink of a pumpkin gourd
 whose tuneful memoir even a funeral scow

from Minneapolis whistles downstream
 (past Resurrection Cemetery, in the snow).
 At the end of the line. & now the prow
 of barge *Bee-of-Good-Cheer* slips (*I am*

Bumble Bee) unsounded into the flow—
 toward St. Louis rendezvous, implicate
 (with canoe-spiral) in compassionate
 spider-*lotos* frame. Alms-given, flower-

ribbed—speech folded into delicate
 ember-membrane (warm, centripetal)
 where it began. & *Pumpkin Man* (pray tell)
is you Everyman? —so the Word was plotted

for blossoming—unspoke, unspeakable
 cascade of sweetness from the root of
 streams. Lie down, Hobo—heed the hoot
 of your dawn milk train again (unbreakable).

11.3.09

The purposes of Providence run
 along a straight iron rail through the center
 of the earth—aligned with the North Star
 floating motionless in night sky. Sun

& planet crossweave an aquamarine design
 through pregnant space; primordial rivers
 of bottomland clay are shaped & surge
 into dome-bubble salience. A wing-span

curve, an upturned keel—fleet smile
 in sunlit delta-mouth, harboring infant-
 speech (rush-woven basket-boat, light
 osier-womb) from blue-green heaven-Nile.

Out of such potter's clay came the gardener,
 cumulative, georgic, sedimentary, slow;
 rose Ancient of Days & his Maggie Lou,
 their rusty plowshare channeling that river

toward an early orchard. & their child
 inherits their earth, & the speech thereof;
 all the curious rivulets of dialect, survival-
 mannerism (borne into quaint parishes, wild

provinces); *& when the walls come down*
 & the shofar blows & the Union emerges
 like a bulbous crown on the rugged skin
 of rippling slopes a prime oneness at heart

out of every region & clime born of love
 & fire *when the walls tumble down* in
 the central welding of mortal good will &
 eternal seal (bright forge in dove-embrace)

11.9.09

& out of the distant starlight-vortex comes
 triangulating wingspread-arch, emitting
 3rds & octaves in a major see-saw sing-
 along—descending & ascending train-hoots

& humming rails framing a honeycomb-braced
 biped dome, or home for seemingly-aimless
 monarch flights. & this embracing salience
 drips with sap from its own mellifluous

milky kingdom—golden-bright refiner's fire
 searing the lips; the awkward *raznochinets*
 stumbles across his own articulations—
 the burgeoning burble emerges, a spinnaker

carried off by the air (trailing the whole ship
 behind by the prow). & as hairshirt St. Louis
 (a royal Hen in his last chicken-coop) sighs
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, so the heart skips,

leaps! from its biped grounding, to that hover-
 craft aloft beneath the starry arch—one
 parched honey-star, upon the breast—& perches
 there, burning—a goldfinch in its hermitage.

& so the whole moth-kingdom of creation
 grow a microcosmic, ultralight, black-&-yellow
 curtain—double-wingèd, double-knit fellow-
 traveler for Everyman (where tent was

rent). & whispers, *into my kingdom*
of the woolly moth, come—into the cedar-
forest of the butterflies—into the radius of
my milk-train way (its horn, its trumpet-hum).

11.9.09

Indian summer. Passage to midwinter,
secret (iron spring). Under a patchwork
blanket of maple leaves, their petrified arc
of windblown barcaroles. *O flimsy splinter,*

needling life's flighty, threadbare fabric!
Seen in the distance, through your mobile
veil—the labyrinthine line of some elliptical
mandala. Through the vortex (imbricated)

of analogies, one petalled idler wheel—
one mote of water-spider yachts . . . one
water-lily. Floats up from phosphor bone
of an old man's memories . . . their buoyant

seal. Their gravity adrift, toward yon
zero *Someone* (diamond-cleft, earth-
turned, earth-toned agate—absolute
birth-red Rahab-canal) whose well will

be done. & in a cluster of chrysanthemum
& sea-roses, the old man in the canoe
steps toward the precipice (Narragansett moon-
stone—*Cautantowit*—above funerary wigwam)—

shoulders a catenary arc there (in the center
of the earth). It is some Finnish sampan,
or Sea Lord's junk—some Winnie's
lurching seahorse (4 hands clock its perimeter);

with Indian Jade tree mast, & figurehead
of red-fringed forest fiddlehead (or dark-eyed
jay), the flagship *Toot-Monde* launches (pied
palomino) forth—unknown, remembered . . .

with fractured idiom of cockney cry
the infant Word reverts to its willow-
rimmed frame; from osier-bow, lips
mime the monastery of a prairie sky.

11.9.09

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