Making Claims

My friends: philosophers, as you know, like to make claims.
This and that are true,
universally, as the evidence shows beyond a shadow
of a doubt, that tremulous shadow that moves the great machine
to start its engines—(this is called dialectics)—and is then O-
bliterated by the blinding halogens that shine, like pure
number, from the Acropolis on down through the boulevards of history.

They light our paths in the heat of noon.

Me? I prefer clam chowder on Thunder Bay,
or a clammy afternoon’s Coke in Cairo, GA,
where the mosquitoes, gorged with blood
and lethargy, take to their hammocks
with lemonade in tow.

Ice-cold.

I prefer the Empedoclean whorl
of a milk-shake, chocolate, at the drug-store.
Whipped cream with a cherry on top.

Claims, the moles whisper among themselves
as they scuttle through the hard ground,
are the whiplash
of the Excluded Middle.
They extract blood.

It’s too hot for all of that.
I prefer an old, scuffed hat.

Six Notes on Theory and Poetry

I

Initiations

There is no first or second:
leading is following,
concurrently swirling
in the wash of words.

Writing:
the and, the but, and the or.
Magnificently,
the alongside and the with.

Language-events within a field,
autumnal, golden,
within a terrain of the world,
vectors and lines of flight—
releasing the compacted, the pressurized, the stratified

Coming up for air, coming up from the wreck
with the sunlight a blur,
brightening as we break the surface.

Words, circulate—

II

Titles

“The Word God”
“Staccato”
“Writing on the Wall”
Narcissus Transformed
TechnoLogics
III

_Work Habits_

Poetry in the morning,  
philosophy in the afternoons,  
reading by sunlight,  
lamplight, arclight,  
and the dreamlight of the moon.  
On the weekends, laundry and the yard.

IV

_Distinctions_

a. Compression  
b. Rhetorics and traditions, crisscrossings—  
c. The abstraction-concrete continuum (but…)  
d. The explanatory-presentation continuum (but…)

V

_Examples_

_Celan:_  
“Speak—  
but keep yes and no unsplit.  
and give your say this meaning:  
give it the shade.”

_Hegel:_  
“This simple infinity…may be called the simple essence of life, the soul of the world…it  
pulsates within itself but does not move, inwardly vibrates, yet is at rest.”

VI

_Images_

Folds, the implications  
of origami—  
hands,  
lips,  
the step and the counter-step.  
Singular multiplicities  
and  
the sea:
(from Homer to Montale),
and then, re-
turning
exfoliating the golden fields
where in great invisible waves
the seeds are stripped from the stalks,
then carried by the winds abroad, a-
loft.