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PART I

# CHORDS

I

I was carrying up the stairs  
a knife in a sheath,  
a bottle of wine, and two logs.

Just thought I'd  
make a note of it.

You know, these days  
you can't be too careful:  
good to take note  
and be a bit fearful.

And in seventy years, say,  
when I'm well up in heaven,  
a grandkid could be asking – again –  
what was he carrying?

And you'll be able  
to tell them the tale  
to do with firewood,  
a knife in a sheath,  
a bottle of wine  
the colour of blood.

You want to take a picture?

Here's my left foot.  
Take one of that.

The right foot,  
you want that, too?

Sorry, it's not  
quite up to it,

is buried too  
deep underground

to be seen, even,  
let alone thought of:

a case, you could say, of  
left foot, or fuck off.

3

I don't know who he is  
(and don't want to)  
or why you're his.  
I just want you.

Walk by the ocean,  
you and the dog.  
I'll split the Taniā  
like a totara log.

4

With age (is what they mean)  
be discreet:  
not right an old man  
announce to the street

his love of a lady  
younger than his daughter;  
or be seen later, off Pahi,  
walking on water.

5

All I need know

what I've got, how  
long I've got?

Tell me, doctor.  
Then go.

6

Good poets die young:

through love and rage  
leave the song unsung.

I just hit old age.

7

This is the mound  
of someone dead

an animal or child –  
a child I think

the way the rocks  
are mounded so –

to mark human grief  
in a white-out of snow.

You don't have a clue  
just where it is you're going to,  
or where in Hell the songs come from  
– would that be coming on too strong?

Your head is elsewhere  
and your heart's out on hire.  
They've electrified your hair  
and baked you to the wire.

When you get God's  
attention, you just somehow  
know it.

And try as you do  
not to, you can't help show it.

When a man pats a dog  
the world is that  
much better a place. The dog  
wags its tail.

Which must mean  
something, to God; and the dogs.

10 JANÁČEK CHORD

You listen  
to Janáček's Czech Requiem

and think  
if God missed that

he must miss  
a lot:

and keep listening  
to Janáček's Czech Requiem

you think  
if God only got

one chance on Earth to hear that,  
we'd be a lot better off.