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Carrying truth
in a long basket yes
truth is a loaf of
new-baked bread
warm under your arm
walked past the new chalets
the Gypsy camp by the stream
all the way to your most
ordinary house. That is truth.

28 April 2014

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Today I translate
from an unknown Russian—
the words (who knows?
masculine, feminine?)
liberal on tongue tip
like a minnow in a pond—
Look, my father said,
a minnow! and I saw
a live silver curl and be gone.
What language was that?
Where was she born?
Does he speak with an accent?
In whose mouth does she speak?

Today I translate
an unknown landscape
into hemlock and yew,
I drag in all the things I like
and leave out the boring stuff—
a translator is a greedy child,
spoiled brat, I want
it to say what I want to hear,
so there, my known Russian
(honey blond hair, pale eyes
standing by a blue canal)
says what's on her mind
and I write down what I please,
she doesn't care, miles away
in another religion, in love

with inappropriate companions,
she has plenty worries of her own,
I hear her every word with love
then distort it, mouth it with love,
misunderstand it, I turn her
doubts into my lies, it's all right,
it all makes sense eventually,
the reader finally reaches out
and holds her in his arms.

28 April 2014

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Not a cloud in the sky
“not even one” (quoting
Grégoire Aslan in *The Roots of
Heaven*) I was going to say,
then I looked up and saw a jet contrail
stretched right over me from east to west.
Does that count as a cloud
or is that just human trash, something
somebody left behind themselves here
for the sake of being someplace else.
a mere floating consequence,
like a line from an old movie.
A real cloud is always where it means to be.

28 April 2014

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Wind closes the book.
Opens it again
at another page.
Fresh beginning.
Bless me, mother,
so I can read the wind.

28 April 2014

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Distant branches
turn vague with growing.
A blur of green beginning
beginning.

28 April 2014

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Epic correption

=====

O know when it is

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At least
Confederate soldiers

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Sometimes brain wrong.
Heat happens red scar
scan turns against self
as if all the roses in the tree
don't mean you anymore.
Or even themselves.
How can we see those
who have turned away,
gone through the wilful door.
Or is every door a suicide.
I mean every death?
The roses are still far from
this spring, sleepy trees in rain.
I need them to come back
and say another word—
we can never hear the last words
what with the slamming of the door,
the shyest girls have the biggest
vocabularies. There is one
explanation, briar roots among
the rocks in Africa a long
time ago, this thingly earth, these
queenly distances, I have lived
nowhere but your names.

30 April 2014

[Remembering the picture of Emma Bernstein on Gracie Leavitt's book]

BALLERINA

1.

Examine her all over again. What does she know? The bronze of the small statue (a ballerina not by Degas) seems to walk on the windowsill. Are you listening to me as I try to speak? She (the portrayed dancer) is more a standing than a going, but what do I know about the speed of women? Of bronze? The words all run together as I try to think.

2.

Enough of doubt. It is time to take the candle out. It has given light too long. A room needs its dark. Bronze needs its shaping. The dancer, however, does not need music. Music is just a superstition. The dance should be the muscles answering to some thinking. Words or musics or shadows on the wall. Go, lovely body, talk with the shadows. Answer them. Music is a superstition. The body is a true religion.

3.

And when it falters? Even so. Invasive surgery or cutting things out and away, the body isolates itself from its parts and says *I am* to all of them, but few indeed of them can say the like back to the whole.

The heart can speak and the brain orate, and all the rest is fantasy and Sunday School, the saints the heart poays homage to, the gods the brain makes up.

4.

Oh those two! What dreamers, what schemers! I wish they could just lie out on the lawn in the rain, somewhere on Long Island, not too far. Babylon, maybe. Why would they name any town that? My grandfather owned property there, 'lots' as we called them, and I have no idea who inherited them. Bad blood flows wherever families are. It pours into the crucible where the copper melts, and makes the bronze strong. Such mixtures we are! And those two running the show, aren't they mixtures too?

5.

After the ballerina wakes, she falls softly, crinkly, to the quiet floor. Because dance is the body's sleep, its dream, its way of knowing everything. That's what the bronze is always trying to recall, that fusion, silent music, no meaning but to move.

30 April 2014

