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= = = = =

To fill the cup  
and drink it slow  
until the very end

the end of truth  
and then decide  
but why.

All day it  
comforts you  
you think.

27 April 2012

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*man ist selbst schuld*

—Thomas Bernhard

The two devils Steiner thought of  
or thought he saw  
bending the world this way and that  
breaking our heads with cruelty and lust  
until we saw too,  
but what do we see  
in this agonized clairvoyancy  
called history  
where we look and see  
the forces in us working outside  
in war and manmade pestilences  
and look away and think  
oh it's just out there.

*What I think*

*makes the world happen—*

you have to believe that,

you have to take

responsibility for Birkenau—

what's inside each human heart

goes out to play.

There is no other energy to history.

27 April 2012

= = = = =

Everything less than it ought or  
try the big blue car  
maybe it will get there—  
am I lonely?

Of course you are,  
frost tonight and hard freeze threatened—  
who wouldn't want  
a steamy cafeteria like the old days  
everybody talking all at once  
and Marx smiling in heaven?

Weak coffee and rich food the American way  
sit down with me now  
not too close  
across the table we talk best,  
talk about the obvious till it disappears.  
Then (only then) we might  
risk standing up and walking outside  
as if we belonged there  
(shoulder to shoulder touching  
like everybody else)  
but nobody does.  
No street no steam no food  
no shoulders no talk no Marx just weather.

27 April 2012

= = = = =

Once we were animals  
then the wind blew

reasons for violence  
in every shoe

rhymes lead the mind  
astray away

from what we tried  
once to know

by stepping inside  
and let walls stand guard

while we sat thinking  
glum enough and guessing

at gods who mostly  
turned out to be demons

and none of them real  
only the walls

the floor and the fear,  
those three are all we

are certain of—  
spend our lives

trying to find  
the one inside

the one who is afraid.

27 April 2012

= = = = =

Interesting the way  
it all stays open

merchandise mind  
middleman personality

a door and then again  
“What is syntax?”

the way words fit breath  
a moist necessity

as go to church  
once in a while

humans are structure-shy  
addicted to architecture

addicted to air  
this strange planet

every word has another  
meaning in the dark

simplest sentence cryptogram  
a message from your mother

always died yesterday  
every orphan morning

child hears clock talk  
man accumulates

*Homo collector*  
in the museum of money

land on your feet  
as if you were here

sly touch of sunlight  
don't tell too much

the nutritious secret  
the arcane sustains you

how silent sun!  
isn't dark a kind of noise

watched intently  
till nothing left to see



that was you  
chasubled in glance

go with the thought  
to be another country

to be gone  
into strange seeming

how can there be  
a place that is not here.

28 April 2012

**“SEPTET”**

*for Marjorie*

As if to be continuous  
were a lie  
the fluid movements  
stopped, so flow  
turns angular,  
sensuous bodies  
in beguine shifts  
interrupt themselves.  
Lacanian *scission*  
abrupt, the interruptions  
*are* the music

by pause we  
interrogate  
reality,  
break the pattern  
of ordinary thinking  
we stop.

Smooth bodies match  
the abstract  
geometry of that lean  
music. A clarinet.  
Stravinsky. The dance.

29 April 2012

= = = = =

And all those things have gone away  
the butcher at the corner  
the way I walk an alleyway  
garage doors gaping and those green fronds—

o speaking is an uphill task  
a nut to crack to make a word come out  
and speak to the nice lady  
waiting at the side of the mind

maybe even for me but all breath  
comes in to calm blue fear  
comes along like the bus that stops  
but not at every corner.

29 April 2012

= = = = =

There is knowing to be done  
and all the pretty witches  
in their green silks still waiting  
for me it turns out to lead them—

but which way is the dance?  
All the little stores are gone  
but the animals keep dying, we still  
dream our guilty dreams and make the weather.

When you learn that everything changes and nothing  
changes you know where that alley goes.  
And what the butcher's wife's name is  
and where their sulky daughter goes to school.

29 April 2012

End of Notebook 343

**ISHTAR, ALCESTIS, ORPHEUS**

What could we or dare.  
The rock admits us  
to the afterlight.  
The chained dog barks.  
The wife has come  
to woo her husband home,  
offer herself instead  
for that interminable  
conversation of being dead.  
The gods of such matters  
listen. The dog  
stops barking, correct  
behavior on both sides.  
The gods decide.  
And that is how we live,  
in the everlasting moment  
of their deciding. Is she  
dead already, is he alive  
again. Are we living.  
We have come into halls  
confused with shadows,  
ill-equipped to judge  
(like Rilke's angels)  
the living from the dead.

The girl has given  
the man receives.  
Whose life am I living?  
And this body too  
seems to belong to another.  
No images in hell,  
only propositions.  
Syntax feeding on itself.  
We stumble in midair.

29 April 2012

## GLANCE OUTSIDE

That they were all of them  
or one together

fenceposts in the rain  
and it was not, is not,

raining. All the trees in leaf  
now and the pregnant moon

uneasy with my staring.  
Diplopia. A disease

of novelists, fiction  
ages you, aged infants,

I could keep you up all night  
complaining. Explaining

all the waters of Babylon  
are in this glass.

Trimming grass by the fence  
for no good reason—

lament with me  
the broken harp

the hare-lip flute  
its fipple frail,

its whistle  
nowhere. Listen,

you keep me up all night  
in dubious mindfulness,

build my pyramid  
at least and give a name

to what is only me,  
make me mean.

You are the map  
but where is the territory?

Men remember what they're told  
women what they surmise

a tree is honesty  
the sun is courtesy



beauty distracts me from the truth  
to be orthodox

you stand in heaven  
hour after hour on Sundays,

a naked woman serves me soup  
I eat it gladly, I am not me

but all the while the priests  
are busy at their drone

o god that is *language*  
issuant from their furry lips

o god you are these words  
hummed into my head

can I ever believe what I hear  
are we all not the same

the cross-less crucified  
in mid-air pierced

by gamma-particles  
every moment wounds

the last one kills  
we stand beneath

in gold mosaic  
a dome frowns down

now you are another dream  
around me in sleep

my lover's fingertips  
touch my arm

waking is a form  
of speaking, in strange

happjness fall  
asleep again

so the dawn of the philosophers  
amounts to us

assuming there is no one  
else, assuming brightness

is natural whatever  
that sad old word actually means

something (I guess)  
that isn't (entirely) me.

30 April 2012