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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

= = = = =

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