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VARIORUM

by several hands

(not with variations)

1.

Pessoa

with several mouths

didst speak

am I you, he, finally,

on the way, by name,

to something singular?

Or all the voices are me

it worries me to think?

2.

Abounding rabbits to my few fox—

gnash teeth quick feet

the word chased down?

Who am I when I speak?

3.

Who am I when I am still?

That keeps haunting me:

who is speaking.

Got to get my *Wer spricht?*

out in English. Do I?

Did I?

Authorship one more
half broken mystery.

4.

To have a week to do a day's work

and conversely, nobody knows,

American manners,

it is time we avow

how little we know

among and beyond all that is known.

I did everything wrong and still it gets done.

28 October 2010

NOVENA : “The Diviner’s Child”

for B.M.

All mothers know the future—
trouble is, they know too many futures,
each one sweatingly glitteringly real
some with blood and some with coronets
all lying in wait for the child to choose.
But it is far Fate, that Other Mother,
who chooses him from the end of time
and draws him into the arms of what is real,
bitter taste of this beautiful afternoon.

28 October 2010

A MAP MOVING FAST

for Sigrid Sandström

A mark. A toad
half under a leaf,
an elm. An oak
over other. The land
tries to keep
pace with the chart.
Our rivals are the sky.
Rivers are always blue
though few are.
Hills are concertinas.
A map is whatever
blows away from your hand.
Religion. The sad theology
of losing things.
Follow the bird
till it passes
the edge of your seeing
but you keep going
in the direction it taught.
Thought. Made. You know
what's going to happen
always but will you

let yourself know
what you know.
It's not a play
but it ends, not a play
but people talk.
One by one the woman
leaves the man
till she comes back
the man talks to god.
Where such things are
it is said to be real,
all round it outside
are the dense bushes
of art. Burning bush
poison ivy spicebush
oleander. The girl
smiles at you like the
curtain coming down.
But where did 'you'
come from, this is about
it, beyond the bushes,
earth churned up by oxen
you try to shake hands
you squeeze, the squeeze
affects the blood. You
do something to both of you.
A hole in the wall

with glass in it,
your pretty aunt looks through
and sees what you're thinking,
the shame of thought,
the weight of having
something on your mind.
Can this you of ours
finally catch up with me?
Farmer with no prairie
and a trunk full of seed?
Is it lawful, is it Bible,
is your pale gingham dress
the sheer of an angel's wing
left barely fluttering
to shield us from exaltation,
from too much seeing?
If we saw we would not linger
here. Shut up, yes, we are angels
undefined, glorious
potentialities, mute songs,
uneasy company, we are blue
dark shadows in winter,
color of *the opposite*,
the sound of snow.
For her, Sigrid in Sweden,
north of the normal,
she cracks the soft world

into angles of meaning
blue over black I praise
because she alone
knows that colors are
the opposite of color.

28 October 2010

published in J.J.Blickstein's magazine (?)

= = = = =

Lily, not nearly
but newly, a slope
for her to slide
down the wet light
or to a need. Her white
face well-known from a book
(something about Solomon?)—
to hold this famous flower
firmly soft in hand
and then open it up
to the subtle investigations
of the air all such
creatures hold
a love song forever in three acts.

29 October 2010

= = = = =

I'm getting ready to get ready—
I write with all the things
you've given me, *vous*,
vous autres mes miens,
my own language you gave me
but I need another to say so.
Once I could have ye'd you
and yitted you but now
all those giving hands
and loving arms are just one's—
e pluribus you.

29 October 2010

WATER HORSE

Where do they come from?
Dream, I think, where the subway starts
and carries me deeper into Brooklyn
to my mother's house, I can't
remember the phone number, can't
remember my mother is dead,
station after station, the polychrome
Della Robbia moldings of fruit and flowers
on the walls of every station different,
old IRT what do they call it now,
the names are all changed, the house is gone,
but the horse keeps coming up from the lake
tarn mere pool river from any water
it clambers forth neighing the thunderous
snort of its intelligence: When you hear me
know that the world has changed.
Everything is different. It isn't even raining.
You can't ride on me but you can walk
by my side, follow when I go fast.

29 October 2010

URIEL'S MESSAGE READ

(after Paradise Lost, Book 4)

If we believed we would come down from heaven
there would be sparrows waiting for us
and glasses of diluted wine such as the Romans
supped at breakfast with a little frustrulum
dunked in it of stale bread, no staler
than the night before whose bliss already
evaporates off the bedsheets of the town
flapping wings in windows by the dawn wind.

If we believed we would rise up from our pleasure
and be God in heaven or as they said in my
old neighborhood of the highest kind of life You
could live like God in Odessa (the natives
Masha tells me speak it with palatal d:
Od-yessa, like ordinary Russian, not like Polish)
and we would wake for breakfast every hour
and dancing girls replete from dancing
would come and saunter by and settle
couch-wise on our prosperous divans. Yes!

Because we would live in the mind more strictly
than Scots-Prussian Kant, more rational than Robespierre,

nimbler than Nijinsky, wordier than Will
at his best (the Dream, Lear, Winter's Tale)
and we would be human through it all, just us,
red meat snug in auburn or in ivory skins,
people, folk, our hearts out loud, our souls
horny for evidence from the spirit world
happy to make it all up for ourselves.

29 October 2010, Hopson

DISCIPLE

The way decides
the footsteps follow.

Could you believe her
when she said that?

You remember a trickle
of blood on her cheek
twenty years younger
and Mozart being played
hard against the over-
whelming orchestra.

But still there is a way
and someone goes it.
And someone's cheek
is whole, as if only
sunshine can wound it.

Duco sequor—leading, I follow.

If you believe that
you'll believe anything.

Ashram. Shock treatments. McLean.

You must go to a very
quiet place to be mad.

blood needs the pale
cheek to say its tiny scream.

30 October 2010

HAUTE-MAGIE

The Seal of Solomon
shines in every window
but who knows how
to listen with his eyes?

30 October 2010

= = = = =

Seed. Seed.

Sad to say
another day
all one.

The few left
translucent amber
now, leaves,
leaves. Seed

hides, light say.
A silent house
noisy in the dark.
Morning far.

30 October 2010

= = = = =

Remember forward
though the chorus
the singer beside you
sings through your throat.
The louder the clearer
you sing the deeper you're
lost. All those passionate
bodies thronging in you
around you making one
sound. O sometimes song
can be only a betrayal.

30 October 2010

= = = = =

I wish you were at the door
now halfway between
equalnight and sunstead
the light stands still
one hour in every tree.
I look through it looking
for you, the one only
the light knows how to bring.

30 October 2010

= = = = =

Woke to gunshots
again this morning
Sabbath chorale
hunters by the river
hail the new-risen
light into which great
water birds ascend,
celebrate by killing them.

30 October 2010

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A smile
like a rabbit's
a laugh like an
advertising man,
now we know him
he is politics
bad breath in his mouth
bad teeth and very sharp.

30 October 2010

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Would there be
then it would say so
luminous jockstrap
beneath wizard's robe
the light of Saturn
refracted through Hecate—
men mix their gods
like cocktails
but the gods laugh
one by one. A bleak
sound, an iron grate
dragged over cement.
Almost the end
of ordinary.
Owls cry.

30 October 2010