

9-2011

**sepE2011**

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**A SEQUENCE FOR LATE SUMMER:** *texts from August & September 2011*

So many to make one.

Anaximandros

from the air around  
a guess of being  
we faltered till we are

\*

Go back and peel off a few lifetimes of your life—  
I am not the one who did this or did that—  
the ones I remember are just characters  
in the book of my memory.

They were and I am and we are different.

\*

It keeps trying to tell you  
there is nothing but the telling.

Tell what you hear.

\*

Music tries to pretend  
the body is a mind.

\*

As soon as men start to dream  
again I will be there. Here.

\*

To hold the mind firm  
when music drifts—  
what do you mean  
to say with your song?

You can tell me,  
I will always listen,  
only that I promise.  
Hold me, hand on your arm

for the wind hath brought  
me here and the wind

will carry. Hold me  
with your words.

Words, songs, hands.  
It is late on earth.

\*

It isn't about the self there is no self.  
None that lasts beyond the seeming.  
Blue shafts of light through broken walls.

Every heart is a ruined chapel.  
Because you gave me your presence  
I exist, streams run, earth moves.

\*

Because sunlight favors there is not feeling.  
All the rest is weaponry men without brothers.  
Rain in the parking lot pure potency.  
To have gone. And gotten and come again.

\*

Honest chamberlain to a usurper despot—  
that's what a friend is to a selfish man.

\*

No one is half as true as tomorrow.

\*

I remember everything  
but only the child stuff  
seems to tell me anything.  
There is no mystery about the rest.  
Everybody works for a living after that.

\*

What *is* music?  
The "Swan of Tuonela"  
tells me a little  
of what she knows.  
The lights half-closed,  
the woodwinds needy.

\*

We drove one midnight  
through the town where  
Owlglass was hanged.

The square was empty.  
Moon was on us  
and the snow had stopped.

But the sea was still nearby.  
The land is big.  
My mind is bound

with thinking about you,  
you are my horizon,  
and the horizon's always far away.

\*

When the gulls begin to cry  
I lie to myself and say I have come home.

\*

In the land of the dead  
some few live.  
The dark personage  
who is the tomb,

whose mouth leads ever in.  
What do they do down there  
those Russian athletes under Africa,  
play music, write postcards in tiny  
script to God? I can tell by your face  
your hands too possess music,  
four strings and some hollow wood.  
The poet has nothing of his own to say,  
only the hollow instrument makes sound.

\*

To close your eyes  
is to be another place  
lawful but dangerous—  
how dare you walk there  
with your naked eyes?

Turn inward further  
where the trees grow dense  
a gleam of light is all you need  
to tell you how far you've come,  
how far away you are from yourself.

[Transcribed 14 September 2011]

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*Everything means.*

That's what humans are stuck with  
on Theme Park Earth—  
a million year theologem  
we're meant to decode,  
by love and insight alone  
shimmer substance into paradise.

15 September 2011

No More War



= = = = =

In secular seasons  
one leaf more on the tree  
I put there  
you'll never know  
and no one notices  
in this strange  
assemblage of the actual.

It is green like all the other  
but unlike them  
it will never change—  
averting autumnal always  
I am unborn!

16 September 2011

= = = = =

Give myself this moment why.

All the questions

taste like candle wax

and you an altargirl

kneel to ring your pretty bells.

We have said

this Mass together

so many times, the words

I say are really yours,

you smile at my thinking

anybody hears me but you.

16 September 2011

= = = = =

We are fences to each other  
and let horses leap them  
we also are, and foxes  
to wriggle through or under.

What we have kept separate  
dries up and blows away—  
at least it's gone when you seek it.  
Sometimes I press against your fence

urgent as music, forgetting I am wooden too.

16 September 2011

## FROM THE LARGE HADRON COLLIDER

1.

Where are we going  
what are we saying  
I can only speak  
the word in my mouth  
that is the tragedy  
I want the word  
in no one's mouth.

2.

We want that to speak  
and when we hear  
we are going back  
into the cosmological reciprocal  
against the ever outward streaming,  
we are the centripetal  
to that hazelnut-sized universe  
one single thought  
from which all matter sprang  
and still keeps speaking,  
so we are salmon people  
who strive against the current  
upstream to origin  
the first thought and the last.

3.

When resin dries  
the letters slip  
the words fall off the page—  
the cosmos as it is  
is a false memory  
of what something was.

*The Sun with her head chopped off,*  
*tenderness of another man's wife*  
or memory of a dream  
a dream that no one dreamt  
we wake from every night.

4.

I went into a room and they measured my heart  
they wrote its music down I could not read  
they stuck the tentacles of a small machine  
to the ten Sephiroth spread out on my skin  
*a man is the Tree of Life*  
they measured my blood  
they told me who I am in numbers  
in chemicals and acids  
they told me everything but the word  
I am supposed even now to to be speaking.  
Is this it now?  
Will it ever be?

17 September 2011

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Did we remember to light the lamp

did we remember the table

to put the lamp on

did we remember the house.

Was the postcard from Berlin still stuck to the fridge.

Did the hurricane flood make the books difficult to read.

Is that the sun shining on the lawn.

It showed a gate in the fence with a fox standing by it.

It showed a zeppelin over a dark sea

It showed children playing with a young goat.

It showed a bus on a sub-Alpine corniche.

It showed Romany musicians playing in the Tiergarten.

It showed the bust of Humboldt and his coat of arms.

The books are fine, a little musty only.

But the buses haven't stopped here in years.

17 September 2011

## ABOUT THE DEAD

But what do the dead do?

Are they our dead

or just the dead

or just dead?

If I die, do I belong to someone?

Someone there

or someone here?

Is there an ownership that begins at death

where the living take control of someone dead

or the other way round, the dead

now takes over the live one?

Will I belong to anyone who speaks my name or thinks of me?

My fingers are cold, it was 42° this morning, it's hard to guide the pen—this cold must mean I'm one of the live ones still.

Cold dark matter. Warm dark matter. Do we choose? Are we the choice itself?

I wonder if there are slaves among the dead, beings who belong to others?

Maybe we living belong to others too, only the dead know it.

Can the dead seek for liberation?

Imagine dying and becoming the slave of that kid with a blue felt pinking-shears edged cap covered with buttons and insignia. in the boy fashion of the 1930s, the one who played stickball on your street though he belonged on Gerritsen Avenue—and he isn't even grown up yet, but fully and powerfully dead.

Do the dead go through another kind of puberty?

Tell me about the sex life of the dead. No, don't.

My right arm hurts when I write about the dead.

We assume everything can be known. But what if there are some things that can't be known?

There are things to eat that I have never tasted. Maybe death is one of them. Or do I just forget the taste?

Death doesn't catch up with us. We hurry towards it.

Do the dead hear us? Do we hear them?

Assume each of us is singing a song incessantly.

This song is our identity.

The swung DNA of our personhood.

Assume this song persists after death.

Assume that by concentrating on that tune once heard you can hear it again.



Or maybe we hear it whether we intend to or not, whether we attended to it or not.

The 'squeak and gibber' of the 'sheeted dead,' our inspiration, as Spicer taught, as Cocteau hinted?

The more of your own dead you have, the more you have to say.

Did Rama's death in 1956 sway me into song (that search for non-mortality)? Did Amy's death rouse my big transformations of the late '70s? Did the Great Deaths of 1989-90 (Joan, Dorje Chang Kalu Rinpoche, Mary, my mother, my father) give me my full voice, ripen me?

I have thought that we have to learn to accept someone's death (however sad it makes us) as his last gift. Gift it is, but maybe not the last at all.

17 September 2011

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We are on the barricades  
of an arcane revolt  
beyond our measure and our means,  
we barely know the fight we do.  
Curved bole of pine tree  
bow bent against the distances themselves.

17 September 2011

= = = = =

Lift the leg a while  
and call it dancing  
you were there  
both of you and you  
said what you said  
and I didn't say it  
yes and no are all it takes  
to make a brave dance  
you said hold old  
do we have to be  
I don't know that either  
knowing and not knowing  
another sort of dance  
your back was to me  
there was no music.

18 September 2011

= = = = =

Unwieldy instrument  
maybe better maybe worse  
the dream hangs on, tells me  
what to do in circumstances  
that will never arise.  
Like a miser's, my fingers  
twitch over the blank page.

18 September 2011

= = = = =

There was a hint of waiting  
then there was me  
a dirt road by a roiling stream  
exuberant foliage.  
Everything hides. Pan  
who is everyone also, thing  
by thing and you by you,  
the tree's tongue and the cloud's  
testament. Then there was  
me, an idle know-nothing  
holding blue flowers, showy,  
color of sky not autumn yet.  
In between time and time  
another animal slips in—  
call him 'me' too, And he  
only does not hide.

18 September 2011