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LAMENT FOR A MAGUS

Things waiting for you in the morning
what did the wind learn

Carnal knack I wrote to her,
her gift (curse) of being
(bringing) everything
to the body
 (finding
the body in everything)

'love handles' she wrote
to hold the body firm
lift it (leave it)
to love.

 "body
of the beloved" Duncan writes,
body so strange a word.
do we know if dead or living
(we use the present tense
for all the dead poets),
the Greeks said *soma* meant body
when it had no more *zoe* in it,
life, *soma* was a corpse body, *sarx*,
just meat
 ready to be eaten by the earth.

But our Body can be a living one,
a maid or magus leaping in the light
(life),

and this is the flesh, the fine
fiber and sinew and a lover's
long hair caught in your teeth.

And she thinks that's just a tree,
a naked man with a lot of green hair
standing on a hillside
west of Eden,

waiting (writing)
just for her
out there
where the sunset comes from,
where the light goes
(life falls)

n Dwat, across the river
realm where the dead
carouse in vibrant absence
in the afterlife,

Sabbath of the earth,
nobody left to go to shul,
the minyan missing

we all are pagans now,
bow down to idols
pour thick cream onto ancient stones.

2.

The planet roars.

So he called

her Sophia, his wisdom,

naked she was

(but was she his)

under a sheer veil

color of amethyst on the Sabbath

color of malachite all the sane days,

he led her (she led him)

from town to town,

exhibited her in market place and concert hall

(she showed him), made her answer

(she moved his lips and then her own)

the questions of the multitude,

she knew nothing (everything)

but could answer all,

I love the way they did their magic tricks

the things she made him want to make her do

and never know why

(she could even fly)

often they just stood there

doing not much

and the people never saw such dancing
and the trees trembled and bowed down
as if a great wind walking through them
that no one felt

 had felled them almost
but they yielded, praised and sprang back

and all the crowd watching in their clothes
got wet in their secret folds
for no reason they could tell,

but she and he were gone by them
and people had to cope with their own reactions
why do I feel the way I do,
why did I need to see her
as she drifted in the sky,
how hard it is to feel,

 she led him later
to the furthest city
you could see the mountain
(the fountains)
clear from there,

he could not fly as often as he tried,
sometimes she'd lift him (loft him)
a little and let him fall,

we have to learn our places in this world.

she let him sit by the window
and look at the mountain
they lived in a small clean apartment
the wood of their kitchen table shone.

Because we do
(even you)
come home,
the shimmery veils hang in the hall closet.
the Magus dozes after breakfast
dreaming her shape silhouetted at the window
where she is really standing
(can't tell if looking out or looking at him,

how can we ever tell such things,
we see everything in profile,
we see everything in silhouette)

O the midnight toil of dreaming,
o the toil of making other people dream!

she whispers to him in dream
(in daylight)
lover such a fierce beseeching
listen to the dream

smell of clean cotton
fresh from the laundry
and now dream that,
dream a smell and wrap it round you,
dream a touch along your thigh from no hand,
dream the light dissolves
and you feel a shadow touch your hand.

3 August 2013

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Other instruments to worry with
are the delicate mica-like Christmas ornaments
broken now in their flimsy paper box?

Every night for a year in Pasadena
I felt the earth tremble in my bed.
Or was it the blond librarian, the blind
harper in Donegal, the camembert
I ate in Petaluma, the apples of Eden
tumbling one by one, turning
soft in the dying fridge?

Blame the earth
you caitiff Christians, blame your bones,
your sweet sweat, the moist
folds of all your denials.

Thus he spoke
and crept back up his pagan hill
where he slept in the lee of a mossy
boulder he could call his own.
And when he woke he'd shout
down at the people being ordinary
down here, Hey, every day is the Sabbath!

Work not, neither weep!
Feed the little god inside you
and let her play!

When we tried to climb up and sit at his feet
he hid himself among all the new-growth pines.

4 August 2013

= = = = =

All the weather
waits on you now
in this year of almost-always-war
the clouds over Annandale
have out-Tiepolo'd Tiepolo,
what does it mean,
they have been so splendid
sculptural massive subtle light-soaked
dense quick and stable deep agreeable
dawn-ripe sunset-crazed outrageous
piled high uplifted lofty hydro-psical
cumulus'd alpine anvil'd thunderheads
more beautiful than I have ever seen
any one place any one month before
and pierced laced ogived animal'd sky
looks through, healing the heart with blue.

4 August 2013

= = = = =

Be careful of the numbers
you let ride on your days
the black-eyed susans know
glad enough for water
and mark out *Enter Here*
a house

 where they stand up
profuse, profligate even
in such summer.

 How did they know
how to make wooden walls stand up
the angled roof endure?
The weight of heaven
is not easy,
 numbers weigh us down,
they call it gravity
but I know better
though I am no flower
can still lift my head,

there is a lightness in us
even in me
that stands us up
against the Uranian scriptures

we still can't read, the stars,

we stand up, we resist, but still don't know

if they're signs icons alphabets

or just the pixels

of some unimaginable image

slowly forming over us all

like an advertisement for God.

Or my mother's face.

5 August 2013

= = = = =

Weather wise woman foolish
I stake my claim on this little hill
where long ago the fairy folk
buried a little wooden door.

If I can find that I'll dig it out
and carry it before me as a shield—
it is the door to the fairies' land
so everywhere I go I will be *there**

5 August 2013

* With Helen Adam, George MacDonald
Robert Kirk and Robert Duncan
all the never-quite-in-love-with-humans
humans who went before me through this hill.

= = = = =

If I tell you my dream
it won't be mine anymore
won't even be a dream

just a shared thing
like a word or piece of bread
or a hand that wants to touch you

god knows why,
get some reaction from you
some answer out of the eternal silence

that is another person,
to put it romantically, to save my dream,
no dream will ever make you come to me

all this night-noise I'll keep to myself.

5 August 2013

NOTES ON WOMAN AS SUBJECT

1.

Not every she is you
you know but some she are

she does a lot
because she is never an object

not even of a verb—
she is always agency,

I'm just the crank
she uses to turn the world.

2.

I worship her agency in fact
my religion is

touch her as she passes by
transfer of human energy
but do I get or give?

3.

Objects are subjects in the dream world

which lets me answer only there—

I write down all they tell me,

I am free of the least ability

and my agency is only a dream they confer.

6 August 2013

ON THE LOOKING GLASS

You never tell me what you really think
means you're poetry not communiqué

gods only know what you really think
and shyness is the mark of godliness

they barely glimpse then look away and never tell.

6 August 2013

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So many trees
more than than me's

and even I
cannot so multiply.

6.VIII.13

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Any old sign has power—
gypsy tarot trump
or on a boulder deep
in shrubbery behind my house
I scraped the moss away and saw
VOTE FOR WILSON someone carved.

6 August 2013

= = = = =

Write as if the hand
couldn't hold any more
of what the body knows

and when all that is done
you'll have just begun.

6 August 2013

= = = = =

Why do you give
a wooden ship an old man's name

what does the mad girl see
seven feet above the midnight lake

where is your mother
while you're prowling through the words

how can a boy
ever be beautiful again

when she walks into the lake
does she feel the water

feel it creep cold up along her legs?
Is madness when there is no body left

or is it when there is nothing but skin?

6 August 2013

