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LO-GO

I need to tell you something but don't know what it is. Be patient with me. We are children, we are sitting on the ground and it's almost spring, the grass is not too damp, the air is not too cold. We are not young, as children go, but we are young enough. Be patient. Play with me, I have been everywhere, touched everything, slept in the stately bedchambers of the mind and sometimes awakened. I do not dream. Play Lo-Go with me. It's a game where two children sit on the ground facing each other, maybe kneecaps even touching. They have a big cloth drawstring bag, and inside it are little plastic tiles, each one bearing an English word. There are two thousand tiles, each with a different word. The children close their eyes (we close our eyes now) and dump out all the tiles between them. This is the game: Each child waves her left hand in front of her until it meets the left hand of the other child—remember we are blind now, we were born blind into the game. As soon as left hand touches left hand, the hands clasp and the right hands are allowed to dive down into the pile of tiles and extract a tile. Only one tile after each contact. But of course there is cheating to be done, you have to be patient with me but not credulous, we both know that cheating is almost always possible, in every situation, in every walk of life. Sometimes we play a game or enter a situation only to be able to cheat. Cheating is like revolution and breaking windows, a little, cheating is a child desacralizing an adult world. And so on. So sometimes the children cheat: sometimes we let our eyes open just a little slit so we can find the other person's hand faster, or avoid the hand so as to prolong the blind hand dance that feels (admit it) pretty nice, sitting on the ground in your own special darkness waving your left hand—the hand of magic and reception—around slowly like a fool. Or sometimes our right hand by chance (though as children we are not likely to believe in chance) or design grasps more than one tile. Please

imagine other ways of cheating, I want to hurry on to the point, or one of the points, of the game, and I don't want you to lose your patience while I quibble and worry. So when this touch-hands get-tile has happened ten times, we open our eyes and look at the words in our hands. The first thing we can do is make a statement using all the words in one hand. If we can do that, and (this is vital) if the other child can accept the statement the first child produces, then the first child gets a point. Otherwise no point, but one forfeit. (Work out what this is later—a kiss, a slap, a sense of shame, a ball-point pen stripe on the skin, it's up to them, it's up to us, it's always up to us.) Then the next child's turn comes. Accepted statements are written down and put aside. The rejected statements have their words thrown back into the pile. A special and lovely thing happens when your statement and my statement can be fitted together and make a new and meaningful statement agreeable to both of us; we both get two points and both lose two forfeits past or yet to come. When the whole process has been gone through ten times, and thus twenty statements have been accepted or rejected, the accepted statement or statements (if any) provide the second stage of the game. The child who did not write the statement is required to act it out or charade it in some way. This will often involve getting up and moving about in space, but please remember this is not sport, this is play, so what's important is not how well you act out the statement I had made (for example) but that you do it, you bring the words to life in space and time and gesture. and then I try to do the same for your words. This part of the game can go on forever. Already it's getting dark and your mother is wondering where you are. My mother is dead, so it doesn't matter so much for me. Still, maybe we can walk together until you get wherever it is. Thank you for being so patient, I think this is what I needed to tell you.

4 March 2012

= = = = =

A forest is a bookcase
every shelf deep booked
in other-language but
every now and then a book is skin.

Light does it. It takes away
all color till
only the skin is left,
the color called skin
and it gleams like the flank of God
passing by, if there were God,
or if anything ever really passed.

It is here. It is always here.
It is dark.

It makes
the people inside us want
to happen together,
All trees
are dark but she
is not dark. The last light
reminds her. Gives
her a new mind.

4 March 2012

= = = = =

So when a guitar
happens the mind
goes out
the banal
accompaniment
eliminates the cordial
tune of thinking.
So that: make noise
itself yourself.
Be word or shout
hit wood with wood
or break things that break.
And then be word. Be word.

4 March 2012

STANDINGS UNDER

against	against
turning	tearing
against	a tear

a different nodulation

cloud maidens

in this math any word is a function

a function

secretly the trees turn me

turn into you

they show you seeing

A woman showed me that a human being

is also a dicotyledonous plant.

That is the big secret.

pyx animæ

soulbox

soul has no place in us

no bone

soul bone

come lick this tree and not that one

lick the color off the bark

maple meant measly meant spotted meant

whatever discontinuous really means

if a thing is discontinuous

(like a forest? tree space tree space tree....?)

where is it when it isn't?

what is it when it's between one part of itself and the next?

can you hold an hour in your hand?

lick your fingers

soul loves us

when we die, soul goes

to be another

another you

now small the brain to have so much world

the mason's lodge

calvarium

what is in the shrine

or nearby

nemus, the sacred grove

our god a circle of whatever made
the stones of Wiltshire the trees of

we subvocalize writing things down

and what we call thinking
is a field effect
images float in the brain's magnetic field

I know this from these
trees the way it
makes me think

casting body before belief
see what comes

no sane person wants to go to school

there is a mustness in the trees

a forest is obligation
that's why all the deer in it belong to the king

and there is no king

o be small against overwhelming!

change the words before they let you
suddenly he was done

tired of marching around the courthouse
the protesters climbed into the fountain

it is death for the soul to be wet

some of them chanted in their native language if any
some changed the words before the words changed

language is its own police

the time comes from a central place

casting about for believers made the world

we made this world to share with you

a naked letter reading in the rain
we talk coarse but a fine mist
sifts through us simultaneous and true
till our knowing is each other

then skin can be fur
Homeric epic
exchanging gold for bronze

copper & tin make brass

my great-great grandfather edited Sophocles

bonfires on the beach in rain
wet skin together
squawky baritone of drinking boys
Cassandra mourned:
then fog came in from the sea and married me

no helter without skelter
how sad the widowed swan—
you carried his sorrow with you
till you were mourning in the midst
of all your marriages

childless mother of many.

5 March 2012

= = = = =

Mirrors are *profoundly* unnatural
without them civilization would never have arisen
or fallen from the dark sky this afternoon
when everything that was made was made
right now and no past past this right now
where gods scheme our mazes

fight alongside me

who knows the gender of a goddess?

they told me heaven was a place
so I became a mapmaker
they told me I had come from a lake of milk
so I grew up thirsty
hoping I could drink my way home

Brown Street on Earth 1939

what a strange place this is

I just noticed

it's not hard to remember

how odd everything was

still is

every island needs three graces

island earth

tree Terpsichore)

she)

SQ

wakes them dance)

But when the time comes

who brings it

who comes with it?

W on Italian wall = viva!

Who makes whom

dance?

a word on the wall

says all

a street can understand

Every road is a one-way street.

5 March 2012

= = = = =

If you saw a color
and opened it up
you'd find another color
and inside that
another and on and on
and never find the sky

We are already
on the inside of the sky
what we see
are the refraction patterns
of our tears

the smudges of words on feelings.

5 March 2012

= = = = =

How a crow
landing on a branch
cuts the whole
tree down to size

tells us how big things are
or far
renews our eyes

I am hidden in this us
like dust in moonlight

I am a window
but you are my glass
through us see
one black bird fly past.

5 March 2012

SUNSHINE

Not too late
to change
sail a log on the ground

not too late
to wake
the ground beneath the log

it all come back
to what we call life

a spoon held a moment
too long in the mouth
after all the honey's licked.

5 March 2012

How sleep
your tiger is!

sensuous
and sprawled there
pointedly yes

shows to look the same
after killing or coming--

maybe that's how we learned
those terrible beautiful deeds

and what to do after.

5 March 2012

(for Ashley & her image of Delacroix's *Tigre*)

= = = = =

(towards STANDINGS)

Blush in tree tops
sun over hill crest
night caught in low branches

*

They hide behind trees
they understand me

*

along Skamandros a growth
of white men and not so white
confounded in battle—all we know
some were standing some were dead
the metal brighter than the man

*

Why is a stand of trees
like yesterday and tomorrow?

*

The tear at the corner of an eye
wept for nothing at all

*

Find me the picture
the words mean

*

Varicose branches
bloodless now but just wait—
that swelling is a cerebrum
we hope with but the world thinks

*

I saw the other night
that men and plants are deep
connected—in time
we become each other
the tree talks the man's
rugged face is silent

E.P.

*

we are dicots
divvied in splendor
by wild children
high in their divine
bodies which are our own

*

my metabolism did this to me

*

big trucks on small roads
atherosclerosis America

*

the name of a flower has no color
but have, stored as your mind

*

interword a weave for me
and wear it as your skin
so hearing is the same as being you.

6 March 2012

for ORESTES

PYL:

I will come to you tonight
and see if you're wild in bed
as with a knife in your hand

EL:

Take me now if you want,
I've done what I had to do,
now I belong to anybody—
or does her blood appall you?

PYL:

It is not good to make love
where the Sun can see you,
it makes Apollo angry—
he thinks he is—and means to be—
the only lover in the world.
That's why we do it in the night—
when I'll come for you,
you will not hide from me.

EL:

Do as you please.
You're a man,
that's what men do.

PYL:

And what do women do?

(PYLADES leaves without waiting for an answer.)

EL:

What do women do?

They do what I have done,
they carve a place in the world
to stand tall in.

They speak.

They understand the world into place.

(ELEKTRA wanders over and gazes at Klytaimnestra's corpse.)

She too. All she did

was what a woman does,

what a woman needs to do—

take what is offered, reach out

for what is there,

Why did I kill her?

She did not more than I would do,

than I will do.

This night or any other.

I guess I killed you to take your place—

there can be only one woman in the world

(KLYTAIMNESTRA begins to move, slowly rouses, stands up. ELEKTRA is horrified, shrieks maybe. KLYTAIMNESTRA shrugs off her blood-stained robes and stands naked, or nearly. She is tall and bathed in light—no wounds are to be seen on her body.)

KL:

It is not easy to kill a mother.

EL:

How can you be alive?

KL:

Once alive always alive.

Death is a cheap trick,
a novelist's last resort
to escape from his story.

A true story never ends.

I am alive—

but you are still my murderer,

I am alive

but you killed me.

In this world both are true.

You bear the guilt of killing me
as I bear the guilt of killing him,

your faithless father you claim

to love so well—the one who left you,

who killed your sister
and filled his bed with slave girls
who couldn't even speak our language—
that father, you barely remember him,
you love a phantom father
and for his sake killed your living
loving mother. I did right
to kill him, but I did wrong.
You were right to kill me
but you still are wrong.
Love me and be right.

EL:

Are you really alive?
Not just another phantom?

KL:

I will be with you forever—
you will see me
but most others will not.
And if by chance they see,
they'll think I'm one of the Eumenides,
come to mind you, come to chastise
your brother, they'll think I'm of
the kindly ones, who enforce
the dark mother-law that owns the world.

EL:

Do you forgive me?

KL:

There is no forgiveness where I am.

And no sin.

Things are only as they are.

6 March 2012