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I stripped myself bare before you
and you didn't care.
Nobody there. Nobody to look.
Nobody to be seen.
Who has done what to whom?

22 August 2011

(The first three lines were dreamt as such, around five a.m., remembered through the next couple of hours of sleep, and written down on waking.)

STRIPTEASE

would never pay if the audience didn't know pretty well exactly what, with such ceremoniously feigned reluctance, was rhythmically about to be revealed.

Striptease is showing us what we already know, but making us conscious of the showing, not the shown.

Imagine a stripper who concludes by revealing something unexpected. Or imagine that with her last veil tossed aside, Salome's body also disappeared. Or was never there. Just veils.

The whole visible world seems a species of striptease. We gaze fondly because we think we know what we're looking at, and think we even know what's coming, and what it all means.

22 August 2011

= = = = =

When everything is finished
we begin.

As soon as we're all begun
it is finished.

Really, it takes no time
and we have time to let it be

she sang, but nobody listened,
only the sequins glitter on her shirt

we understood. That
we *could* almost hear.

22 August 2011

=====

When I have achieved supreme power
I will assume the title Reviser of the World
and change everything I can.
Change for its own sake, lovely change!
My army will be called Educational Assistants.
With any luck, during my long reign
we may be able to revise the first page.

22 August 2011

=====

When they're angry they cry.

Love is a kind of anger at the probability of loss.

Certainty of loss.

Human love. I wonder if there is another.

22.VIII.11

= = = = =

Waiting on the barge
a replica of the Sphinx—
the real one
not the eroded copy at Gizeh.

This one can open her jaws
to speak to us
and take us in deeply
if we do not answer.

By night I watch the barge
wallow gently in the shallows.
Why has the river brought this here?
Who is my mother?

22 August 2011

=====

Girl bike go
by sing
what rose-
helmeted
Athena told
virginity
not an issue
speed is all
any road
never comes back.

23 August 2011

=====

Too many minds
today to be none.
And only no one
ever has anything
new to report.
No one makes it up
as no one goes
along no road
until we're finally there.

23 August 2011

= = = = =

I drew a star chanced to look
like a bat, I drew a bat
outstretched against the blue soirée
a freeze-cam moment
the beastie never knew
herself so huge
when she was all
at once everywhere
wings spread
legs stretched to snatch.
It is said that what we
call night is the shade
or shadow of a larger
version of my bat,
a life spread wide against light!
A kind of quiet mother.

23 August 2011

= = = = =

I am a cup
made from my father's skull.

I am a robe
made from my mother's skin.

There is nothing inside me
or is there is
then that hollow portion too
is made from someone else.

24 August 2011

ARTIST

Turn the girls inward
so they face the luminous future
that is always at the exact center
of any circle, and only there.

Bed them forward
so their eyes focus on that luster
and their bodies
bow low before it.

You are outside the circle
marveling at them,
you will never see it.
The sight of them there

is as close as you'll ever come.

24 August 2011

= = = = =

Moth on window screen,
we sustain ourselves
also by what keeps us
away from the light.

24 August 2011

THREE SERIOUS PIECES

Like your arm going to sleep
under a friend's head
when the friend is sad

lying together telling the truth.
You overturn the world
to find the world
with both of you in it

a little past midnight. Noon.

*

It is my sacrament to serve.
Willingly. There is a red
curtain inside the skin
so the man inside can't see out.

*

Deer sifting through the trees.
You woke halfway through breakfast,
there was a man pounding on your mind
remember me remember me
all I want is your body I have none of my own.

*

What do they see
when they show?
Love is the opposite of liberty—
Pan and his girls in the leaves
no clinging no attachment
everything shown everything known
no ladder to climb, no truth
somewhere else, no truth
further than this. Slender young trees.
The sky is in the sky.

*

Panisks. Dryads in particular.
This offering to them, my mistletoe.

They are here with me in me,
we drink together from one cup,

something from apple, something from pear.
And a piney part too, a feel below a taste.

*

I confess to the woods
that I have trespassed

on their rituals,
I have mapped myself
into their ceremonies
till I'm lost

and this being lost
is finding my way.

*

You can tell who they are—
when they laugh at you
from leaf shade and sun glade
it makes you better, you smile back
happy even at their healing mockery.

24 August 2011

= = = = =

They're not supposed to be perennial
but two days ago a mauve
petunia appeared, all alone,
in a crack between terrace tiles and housewall
where no flowers had ever been before,

one single flower. We solitaires, I thought,
we isolatoes, we black Ishmaels,
we work out way in where we do not belong,
we crack open the secret chambers of daylight
and spread our stuff out, making something
new where nothing was before.

25 August 2011

= = = = =

What can we know of animals
we who aren't even our own?

The lemurs knew the earthquake was at hand,
the lions loped out and watched their shelter shake.

If we looked at each other the way
we look at animals we keep locked in the zoo

I think we'd see we know all that kind of thing too
but don't know that we know,

distracted as we are by cortical obsessions
like thinking, remembering, describing

so we miss the elegant warning tremors of fear and lust
that tell the monkeys to fuck or flee.

25 August 2011

ALPHABET SOUP

Now is a fish

being is a house.

Life is a cup of rich tea good even when cool.

A question is a head to scratch.

A wise man is a fish hook to catch young trout.

A door is a door what more do you want.

Wine is a well in the desert.

Folklore fondles you where you least expect.

Some bird carries some beast back and forth to drink.

Saliva is the best sauce.

A bow tie levants from a bush and leaves a battered hibiscus.

The further you go in the darker it gets.

25 August 2011

= = = = =

Chamber singers in an empty room
what sings? What's this I hear?

The broken pot holds water still.
The oldest images still hold the eye.

The surface of the body is where meaning lives.
The Greeks made Aphrodite out of stone—

all curve and touch and contour and no way in.
This is not an accident of technology,

this is what they meant. Enter
at peril of losing the *form* of the thing you love,

the shape that summoned you in the first place.
Of course it is simple and obvious and normal to go in—

but there is another way of knowing, knowing you
knowing me knowing you knowing me,

glissando of sensory neurons, touch
triumphant and telling everything it knows.

25 August 2011

= = = = =

640.

All the spirit who come knock.
Mist opportune outside at last.
The grey of morning sweeter than bright sun.
Pilfer a rose from me she said.
I will know the tunnel in the trees.
I will wake the marmoset instead.

641.

It was the Queen's own handwriting.
I saw it plain on every side her words.
When surface touches surface it is she.
The red intention and the gold result.
We are closer to the word than any thought.
Puzzle with me where the roads divide.

642.

It is not enough to have a thing to say.
You must find a way to stop saying it.
You must down the curtain and applaud the actors who were never there.
You must bow to the nonexistent audience.
You must take off your clothes and not be naked.
You must smile at the sunrise and say goodnight.

26 August 2011

=====

643.

One day the things will let me rest.

Talking to the other side but who is listening.

What fountain do they drink from before Lethe.

Do they turn back and see and send back love to those they see.

Suppose one of the departed looked back to this side.

Here we stand mourning or forgetting him.

27 August 2011