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Don't you see how hard I work
to take it easy he said
if I'm not light-hearted in my work
which is the act of speaking
it will grow dull and dead
and if I'm not bone serious
about my hobby—transmitting
humanist tradition by language—
it would get ridiculous. And dull.
Solve et coagula works
for everything. It all is alchemy
he said. Even that squirrel in the rain
one flick and his wet tail is dry.

1 December 2010

CERTAINTY

Try to what it can
depending on the first rule
these things to talk about
sea foam on the sand
an hour later
all you know it's been.

1 December 2010

TRUST THE READER

More lyre, less truth—
let them make of it
what they can, music
is their enduring ears.

1 December 2010

= = = = =

Economist of hours
walk down Lepers' Lane
where lawyers leap
to make the articles of love—
I am engrumped this day,
lordings, ladies, and my tooth
exasperates with harsh corn.

Years back in Peru

I met a girl like you

I sang now spend so much time
with people and give
so little and get even less—
the abstemious vampire
laments his weary prey.

1 December 2010

TREATISE ON ARCHITECTURE

(Farbenlehre:)

Emotional resistance is green.

Physical resistance is blue.

Red is too small.

Yellow is architecture, can be lived in/

The sky is that which holds us in—

keeps us from heaven.

(Red is too small)

===

So I want to walk out

into the world—

a building ought to be exactly and systematically
relevant by wield and size to the body that steps into it—

a building must make us dance.

1 December 2010

[A DICTATION]

I wonder if anything is likely to come of this experiment. I wonder too if there are vultures that circle around the interior of even the calmest brain all ready to pounce on some dead idea I left too soon perhaps weltering at the roadside. Now that I think of that macabre image I begin to think of all the abandoned jetties, all the floating lifeless craft drifting aimlessly over the Indian Ocean. There are moments when I am sure that the birds of heaven look with particular attention upon the animals of Earth—they see us walking, they hear us complaining, they charge in and out of the shadows of our great trees, trees we planted to make them free. But really they just make *us* happy.

1 December 2010

= = = = =

Worth as much as maybe
the small animal without a name
climbs the museum wall

there we find a location
meant for the human body to
rediscover itself

a part of space!
a brain with feet!
a heart with hips!

and so on up the stairs
and down again—think:
in any one of our houses

a mouse has more museum
than any of us in even the
pannest Pantheon

a house should be no habit
but a dance to do
be big enough for us

to be small in it.

Maybe a hedgehog,
maybe a centipede.

1 December 2010

= = = = =

Known for free rigging
let it flap this way
your sordid yawl
on current not by wind
the slogan lettered on your hull
or slow as Laotse
spilling up some hill
the white ox of his deep thought.
Here: beast or boat,
you decide. This dance
has only room for one.

2 December 2010

= = = = =

A butterfly too
depends on gravity.
The vast outside
that makes us fall.
But the meat of me
is a wise animal
also and replies:
Drift. Dream. Deny.

2 December 2010

= = = = =

I once was a mountain
but I moved

once I was an ocean
but a woman came
and showed herself to me
she swam away in me
and I followed her home

and once I was the sky
but someone looked up at me
and she was weeping
so I ran away
as far as I was able

now I am nothing
and am nowhere
and still I love you.

2 December 2010

CAUTION

is also a flower
low, hundred-petaled with thinking,
yellowish, mental,
like a chrysanthemum
a name that means golden flower

Cowards are called yellow
and live a long time

This is a praise of cowardice
bravery is ego-noise
cowardice is ego-silence

which is better which is worse
endure to understand.

2 December 2010

= = = = =

The Chinese calendar
will walk on the wall—
what will it be this year,
a phoenix bothering a cloud,
a rabbit hiding from a little girl?

We miss each other so much
and the wall knows it.
The calendar listens to the wall
and learns. Everything
can be learned by standing still.

2 December 2010

ACCOMMODATIONS

cubicula locanda

as in Apollinaire as

if in Belgium spoken

Rooms to Let

no space for students

who don't speak Latin—

I have named myself The Grass

and I have frost on me

I glister with lies like a rhapsode,

mercy, I sneeze.

When he had finished his advertisement

he turned to the girl beside him

admiring the tilt of her nose and the mystery

of her lidded eyes then spoke

O you who hear me and don't hear me

but only what I say, whose fault is it?

Yours for not grasping, mine for being

or being veiled in speaking? I hid

myself in words and you didn't find me.

3 December 2010

ORTHOGRAPHIC THERAPY

Bliss-less motor-run
on evidence—change altitude
by attitude alone.
Hats off for the Karamazovs!
Respell your life.
Any word you think you are
can become another, can save you.
An old shell floats down the river,
peanut in your mouth—
suck or chomp, your choice—
get ready to rewrite your life.

3 December 2010

= = = = =

I make my money the way the Europes do
writing this and selling that
and singing whatever comes into my mouth
to build stone bridges to the clouds and call them church.

4 December 2010

= = = = =

I wasn't warm enough
I laughed in the street of weeping
walked fast
instead of interviewing shadows.
Study me: I have come and gone.

4 December 2010

A THING

This fountain pen, a black Sheaffer, was given to me forty years ago by John Martin when he and Barbara were still living on Camden in West Los Angeles, near the Temple of Moroni. Its filling tube ('snorkel' they used to call it in their ads a decade before that) extrudes and retracts now with some difficulty. Soaking the whole pen in a mild soap solution for a few days every few years seems to keep it going, the valve part. It writes beautifully still.

It makes sense to tell you about my things. About things. After all, it's Christmas coming and that's the great season for Things. Fetishes of generosity, obligatory potlatches of love—what a race of people Christians are and post-Christians, how abashed by the flesh, and how they have to turn the flesh to symbolic objects called gifts or, with weird pertinence, 'presents.' Abashed by the sudden coming of the Divine Nature into the Human, God putting human nature on. Terrified of the nobility we took on with this changed flesh, we put our faith in silent objects, take comfort from mute thingliness.

4 December 2010