

12-2012

## decA2012

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= = = = =

My Basque my understanding  
it came through you  
you cut your corridor

Santander

through which it all came  
to be us, the afterlings, Kelts and such,  
to be me and like me,

to be *west*

the end of Europe and you  
are the firstlings there, still there,

Europe Island

allow me to presume

I am all the islands, gladly naked  
and groan all Greek and Gaeling—

*you*

sucked me through you to become myself  
(forgive my exactness)

how did you

do it and do you do it still,  
all ram's horns and mountains  
cheese and dialects,

do it

by speaking no known language—  
Berlioz thought the demons spoke like you—



mass of a car hurtling—

what is the number

the page the cellphone the bird overhead

deer escaping through saplings

how can I

be a part of this, endure

the separation of myself

from all that I witness,

from the previous condition

I keep trying to imagine, remember,

those verbs are the same, aren't they,

reverberate in the hollow chest—

now where did I leave my heart

the Giant said

and the young Hero heard.

I stole the Giant's heart

I hid it in my stinking little self—

that's why I lift you up,

remember myself in time and let you fall

undevoured.

When I was a boy I heard

an old man say

my heart is bad

and thought I knew what it meant,

I thought I had one too.

1 December 2012

= = = = =

*Non omnis moriar*

or will be born again  
as an active verb  
in someone else's body  
who will be or will  
not be me—because  
the me I suppose  
will falter living  
into the world  
as a word or a book or a memory  
and the real one—unknown  
to me—will endure again  
the ecstasy of life  
on this or some such earth.

This is a mix of what I know and what I have been told—and if I believe them and me, what shall I do for supper? Quiet mind, done travelling, keeping watch. All the rest is language. The beauty.

1 December 2012

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Once all the cars were black  
and all the pages blank  
now I have filled them all  
and colors shoot up and down the street.

1.XII.12

= = = = =

Wail this waiting

but serve.

U and I

are side by side

on the keyboard,

the hands make

many mistakes,

maybe one day

they'll get it right

and we'll be all

that's left.

2 December 2012

= = = = =

We see branches as reaching for the sky

we see the trees

surrendering to a higher power.

But when we lift our arms

nothing happens.

Nothing accepts.

The trees we are

stand leafless and cold.

2 December 2012



= = = = =

Notice these things  
a lip like your mother  
an eye like your own  
the dangers of folklore  
are all round you now  
captivating shimmer of light  
in the wolf's deep fur,  
she-dragon in her gorge.  
Walk the other way, knight,  
get lost before you get found.

2 December 2012

## ELEVEN-IMÖX

Today is Eleven

Lizard

Crazy

pray for rain

the sky

opens.

Mayan Calendar

the Daykeepers

have kept all these years.

These years.

And people think the world can end!

Let your right hand

hold your left hand

steady, don't wobble,

the end of the world

comes every single day.

Don't think about it.

Or don't think

the one you are today

was here yesterday.

Not at all—

        You are new,  
new. Here for the first time,  
no wonder we're so anxious  
all the time,  
        we're all impostors  
pretending to fill our own names  
like a little boy trying to wear his father's coat.

The Mayans knew,  
        every cycle ends  
a new cycle begins,  
forget prophecies,  
        o those dreamy optimists  
who wish that anything could ever end,  
let alone a world!

        O the aching poor  
        who can think of no other way  
their misery can end.

        But nothing ends.  
        Time is crazy, tumultuous, unrelenting,  
a crazy dancer, never stops,.

        Maybe that's why  
we invented art—

to give edges to experience,  
so things have limits,  
limits,

start and finish.

Because nothing else ever ends  
except this.

2 December 2012

*(for my Charlotte birthday reading tonight)*

## (DANCE BUILDING)

The other evening after a reading, Steven Holl talked to me about poems, lines of poems, about dance. I thought right away of dance as the dominant metaphor in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century poetry: Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Williams and many more—swayed by the graces of Loie Fuller and Nijinsky and Isadora Duncan. And here was a marvel for me, an architect letting the cat out of the bag, speaking of the dance; who could know the dance better than someone who makes buildings open up and stand?

A building, like a dance, is something *to do*.

You do it on foot, by steps, or stepping over.

There is light in its air, it wields light and dark to some purpose, shows and conceals. It doors. It windows.

The light or dark body in its dark or light clothes moves through the dark of hallways and the glare of skylights. *I see them walking in an air of glory* an old poem said. A building makes, can make, even the most thoughtless workers or visitors part of a corps de ballet, the hushed music of people passing through shaped spaces.

Shaped space.

The constant dance. Can you open a door without dance moves, trot down a hallway, turn at the newel post and rush downstairs? And the beautiful solo of

someone crossing an empty atrium at twilight, the interior lighting beginning to conquer the filtered light of the unshaped world outside.

Space has its arms around us, space is the eternal partner of the dancer, of the building.

The dancer and the building: both explore, explain, *les espaces du dedans*, the interior realms from which poetry comes palavering—you can hear the resonance of shaped space inside the tone of the poem, just as you can hear the dancer's body in the rhythm of the poet's breath.

Time is an illusion that comes from moving in space. Space is the only reality, we are the same as the sky.

And so the Tibetans call their dakinis *sky-dancers* or *sky-walkers*, those seldom seen dancers who occupy the space outside us and the space inside us too, us, we noble sinners of flesh and mind.

We open the door, and everything goes in with us.

The building makes us move.

And now there are buildings whose doors open by themselves as we come near, the building yearns for us and we yearn to be drawn in.

When we look at some of the beautiful buildings from the past (I think of Wells Cathedral with its amazing dance of stairs, or Ely on its hill), we see that they are

not made just as single visual gestures, a simple sign in the sky or sculpture to admire. These great buildings shape the space of the towns they stand in or watch over, just as they shape the movements, I'll insist on calling them dance, of everyone who comes inside. Shaped space shapes us. They are the dancers of the city.

I get tired thinking about buildings with no people in them, poems without readers. Where is the insistent dance of inside and outside, then?

The dance inside a Catholic church or public library or elementary school, my body remembers every building it has been forced to dance through, been danced to by. Why don't we see architects as they primal artists, whose shaping of our terrain makes it possible for everything else to happen, for us to learn to shape things for ourselves? If they can shape a cave or a whole hill, we can shape a set of words, some colors on the rock, some sounds in a tune. Even the caves of the Dordogne where 'art' first shows itself are shaped spaces, shaped by image and light and dark if not by trowel and pickaxe. And then thousands of years later and thousands of years ago, we see the simultaneity of architecture, painting and sculpture in Anatolia: Çatal Hüyük, Göbekli Tepe.

And isn't the darkest cruelty of a prison that it decrees: in this place you will not dance? Piranesi tried to lighten the weight of that—and the secret of his great pictures was that he enlarged the space confined, made it vast, no less menacing and dreadful, but at least the body forced to linger there had room to move.

This morning deep mist poured through the trees in the hour after dawn, dense as sea fog. The mist reminded me that the world around us is not just about seeing; it

veils itself so we have to move to know it, move through what we think we've seen and find something only the moving body knows. Those old architects who laid out a labyrinth on the floor of a cathedral's nave or narthex, that 'going to Jerusalem', turned a casual churchgoer into a brave pilgrim, moving in sacred space.

Knowing something means moving with it. A solitary dancer dances with her own shadow—who else is there? In public we move with others, the brilliant massed dance of pedestrians we see crossing 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue every time the light turns green, hundreds of them moving through and with each other, never touching—the city makes them do it.

Any building can teach us. Let us maybe come to judge a building by the dance it makes us do. The art of space, space known and embraced, space used, married, flirted with, surrendered to.

People think dance studios have mirrored walls so the dancers can see themselves. Not so. The glass is there to multiply space, so the dancers can see the space in which they feel themselves moving. That they know by moving.

3 December 2012



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Mist and owl  
I know you're there  
the mist is clearing  
owl sleeping  
in dark clothing  
on their way to school.

3 December 2012

= = = = =

Symbiotes of starlight  
the matter in your hands  
members of the body  
as we are also of.

3.XII.12