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But I held it in my hand
a while and wondered what it was.
Hard, smooth, its temperature
soon the same as my own,
too dark to see its color.
Heavy for its size, like a D cell
battery or lump of silver.
Was it silver? No features,
smooth cylinder, rounded
at both ends, slight meniscus.
Keep it, let it go?
Knowledge is a terrible thing
to waste unknowing things.
Here, I give it to you,
a mystery, a little warmer
for having been held.

4 December 2013

THE GENDERS OF POETRY

to tell

as much as possible

and make music of it

as it goes

or tell a little

little

and make the silences sing.

4 December 2013

= = = = =

The beginnings are waiting
the ape in me to quiet down
and let the calm vermiculate
spirit of the Inside Heaven
make with his famous aria
already, the Heldentenor,
Melchior of my childhood,
famous but not yet written,
the words of it I mean, the
music of it older than my bones.

2.

So that's why I love opera.
The tenor mostly gets the girl
(the grail) but also mostly
loses. Best of both worlds,
triumph and crucifixion.
Is it enough for music to get
born? And then the evil

baritone, voice like mine,
priest and predator. And far
away, way above our feeble
tessituras herself *in alt.*
coloring the skies with
her lucid vocalise. No words
required, just to get started.

3.

And all this while the opera is waiting
also to begin. The house is filled with the dead,
the living deafened with desire, the newborn
grizzled already with disappointed appetite—
only music can heal them: must-music,
chandeliers of impure sounds shattered
all over the commodore's ballroom, remember?
No. It's still nowhere where I am. No
sound, no carpet, no gilt railings on the balcony.
In free fall the mind alone with what it thinks.

4 December 2013

= = = = =

Perched on no branch a bird.

You name it, you've got

the visual imagination,

all the colors, feathers,

zoology, physiology,

behaviors, all those words

or say the simple pattern

around its eyes, unique.

Imagine.

All I know is a bird,

a bird perched nowhere.

4 December 2013

One thing

loses another.

tell the stone
you're sorry

even if not.
It won't

complain, its
stillness

is something
of an untruth

as well, its
molecular moment

never stops,
it pretends

to hold you while
you pretend

to sit on it there
staring around you,

into the heart
of the air, grieving.

4 December 2013

= = = = =

The open music of how it starts
cork-lined receptacle for nested gongs
inside pendulous reverberations as
alchemy in the sense of skin. Sin.
Poetry and corruption — political
over the air and economic downtown —
so waltz me cleanly in your garden,
with sleek blue frustrums all lined up
clipped from yew trees in Tudor mazes
all set to wander there and then
and never dare to reach the end of
that skilled discourse of men pronouncing
all the experimental pronouns of the heart.

5 December 2013

= = = = =

Labial is that part of me when assets
complicate the cordial silences down there.
Phantom prophet stumbling in the desert
from waterhole to thornbush he sets on fire
and names the pyre *I am here and I desire.*

5 December 2013

= = = = =

That the thing was thinking me
was all too evident. The long south
tending avenue past the medical school
where once I never mind and never did
but only the miracles of English prose
(Vaughan, Browne) saved me from making
lines in the sand any fool sea could smudge
when I wanted the whole city to eat
from my hand food it had put into my other
you know how it is, hot in the summer so
you'd never believe how much snow could
challenge the beauty of art and vanity,
o the glamor of her lips receiving information
as if she had been waiting all her life
for this ancient guesswork, this word I knew.

5 December 2013

= = = = =

Or I could have waited for the bus
by the sunken vacant lot where kids
were s who ledding down the meager slope
thank god for gravity and the transfer
yellow paper in my hand and years
determinedly passed and now is now
no snow yet and no buses evermore
just some radiant clutter in the mind
I offload and tell you listen sweetheart
this is all I ever meant by music.

5 December 2013

= = = = =

Mon coeur mis en berne

My heart at half mast
was sent to Switzerland
to reclaim its silences

mountains mean nothing
that's why they let us
speak and be silent at once.

In the Overland I found him
a teacher a master sent,
himself a master and made
me a fellow of that company
whose business is to wake
and wake the heart —

to pretend the body can speak
than listen to it until it does
to tell our long bones

in the peace they share
with mountains. There,
that's what the old story
means, the world *was*
built out of us, and is.
And otherly we mind.

6 December 2013

= = = = =

Honey kept
In a warm place
for five thousand years
is honey still,
honey is sort
of immortal.

But we don't have the time to live forever.
And no warm place.
Bee-lessly we dwell in un repose.

6 December 2013

= = = = =

Birds make the weather.
Don't think about the other thing.
Any storm is enough to begin,
famous scientists revise the earth
but do you listen? Hope not.
The sickly semaphores of desire
empurple your glance.

Do I mean what I say or is it you?
Sign-bearer. December rain,
day Dog, year Snake,
Era of the common man –
or did that end in Birkenau
when labor and captivity were one?

One more opera to swallow me down,
that's what you are, a smile
made out of denial no other music.

6 December 2013

OF LOST WORDS

1

As much as we could or be other
as if the answer were an animal
creeps into our tent at night
and turns into stars above us,
small hot indoor stars that scorch
the faded canvas of our covering
and give us just enough light so that
my hand reaching for you casts
an ordinary shadow on your breast.

2.

But it is no animal, this word you keep
warm between your honey-sticky paws
—surely the right image for the right
and left halves of the brain, a single word
caught in between, a sagittal word prompt
to fly from sky to heart and back again,
swift word trapped in the cerebrum, word
known only by its echo this mere mass flesh.
I hold you tight and hear it whispering.

6 December 2013

= = = = =

Just because some monster
doesn't mean,
or the new house they're building
secretly on the moon, those
refugees from Paraguay —
can you speak your native language
can you still eat sticky rice,
swastika flags all over the piazza?

It is a terrible world in there,
long gaps in black basalt
walls of a madhouse.

7 December 2013

= = = = =

Marina in winter:
shrouded forms
sealed from rain and snow
boats on land
and nobody
playing with the river.

Behind suburban houses
uniformly white
more shapes in sheets.

Boats on land
bad magic, uneasy children,
sparrows laughing at us from the rail.

7 December 2013

= = = = =

Speak to be understood

sun on snow —

get the animal moving

one times itself

is four, your favorite number

the multiples are simple

the many in the few

linger in subtraction

until there's only you —

such stories topple slow —

among the miracles

the child murmurs to itself

fast fast to get things said

the nuance of words
its endless etymology
opens in your hands
never enough
to speak you must.

7 December 2013

still going through puberty
still trying to find out what it means.

Is meaning the right word?
Isn't that just a clamor to be beautiful,
the word 'glamour' said in her lips?

What could there be to say or know
isn't this this enough?

7 December 2013