

12-2011

## decD2011

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## STEPS (11)

catch then while they're thinking

the need is clamorous

an image

slides off the wall

and waits

an image waits.

Everything is waiting.

Monosyllables everywhere,

all the important stuff

speaks in one breath.

If a breath can't say it

it can't be said.

A flashlight on the moon

in other words

a hammer, a naked foot

a Roman arch in Gaul

in other words

a sparrow from melting

ice drinks this  
very morning  
in other words  
in other words this fingernail.

Hope to have  
so many kinds of sparrows  
are they races  
or little artworks each  
the painted pattern  
the price of beauty  
gallery of air?

At least they're here.  
The broken mirror  
Mary's cat the blue  
futon Elizabeth's  
new Beemer shadow  
of the full moon  
not here. Not here.

Keep trying.  
Like is like that.  
Love is like this.

And be done with it.  
The critic of the passacaglia  
left during the allemande.  
Things leave us with ourselves.  
This is the sorrow of great art.

14 December 2011

= = = = =

You talk of secrets and explain that there is no secret that can't be told. Or there is no secret in what can be told. Or once a secret is told it enters into the aluminum world where the ordinary is orderly around us, and we dream. We alone dream. But aluminum doesn't dream. Hydrogen doesn't dream. What is dream for us is intercourse for them, the passionate orgy of matter that we call chemistry and teach (almost by instinct) to teenagers, as if they already dimly knew what electrons knew and how they flew.

But when the gom-chen, the meditators, speak of ordinary mind, *thamal gyi shespa*, they don't mean the everyday dream consciousness that walks us around. They mean the true basic radical beyond-all-contingency-and-seeming mind of pure awareness, ordinary in that nothing adorns or obscures it. The uninterpreted.

But I think there are secrets that can't be told. We can maybe name them: the secret of the hollow of the knee, the secret of the anus, the secret of the nape of the neck—secret here is secret knowing, intensely you but you can't say them. Sometimes they tell you their secrets but the words fade on their way to your mind. Sometimes you try to talk about them, you'll try to say He breathed on the nape of my neck and I felt...But you won't be able to say what you felt. Or you didn't feel anything—you heard the nape crying out its secret but the words of it died in the nerves of your throat, the pulses in your quiet neck.

What does the body know? What the body knows is what religion tries to reveal. The stars in the winter sky try to learn the intricate scripture evident in the human body, try to learn it and shout it out: the heavens declare the glory of God, some Bible says...and what could the glory of God be but the deep inscription of the body? And here is where words come in, those handy stars, they fit so easily in our mouths and ears. Every word shouts the mystery of the body. It is why we go on talking forever. *Gnothi seauton*, said the ancient maxim, know yourself. Or as we would say, Keep talking.

14 December 2011

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How strange the  
news knew me

gave me  
something to say

I never have anything  
to say usually

reading what happened  
is just not listening.

15 December 2011

*(hearing about the death of George Whitman, who welcomed me in his Paris  
bookshop in 1954, amid all the myriads he entered into the invisible college of the  
New Word.)*

= = = = =

A man walking along a song

an empty house talks back

you go through the door

you sit at the table

you have said all this before

the cup tastes good

a table is very kind

but you don't know

something comes after

something before

it may have been a bird

or something you almost are

a friend's name

at the back of your mind.

15 December 2011



= = = = =

(Women make up the language  
that men print  
that's why  
they spell them alumni)

15.XII.11

## STEPS (11)

Bleak measure  
or small lost things  
saved by wearing shoes  
we tread raw earth  
it is almost music  
the stuff we forget

2.

And comes back at midnight  
eyes close enough to see.  
We belong to each other  
naturally, then decide  
to live apart. This  
decision is called language.

3.

I am lying  
with the sky  
the whole sky  
covers most of me,  
it goes me  
to sleep  
reading it,  
there is a part though  
of me it can't see,

all of the words  
the same all  
meaning different.

4.

I who am a young god  
appear before you as a fat old toad  
it turns out it's up  
to you to know the difference

It takes so many years of living  
learning things before a man realizes  
he must already be an old man  
before he knows he's a young god.

5.

Somewhere else I am waiting  
for me to move  
An empty house learning to breathe.

6.

We made it brittle  
so it breaks  
otherwise you couldn't say it  
it couldn't mean a thing

7.

Infamy of old roads  
never went anywhere  
no such place as Spain  
Santiago still is Jerusalem  
we all are just Romans  
just remembering.  
Nothing is as it was  
but it's all still here.  
Delicate features  
of a frightened girl  
a fairy tale  
telling itself in the empty woods.

15 December 2011

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Are the roads yet  
sparrows hawks over  
sounds come to think  
too thick to be words

yet there used to be  
a miller here, his work  
the broken millrace now  
a heron stands in the shallows

the season says so  
time breaks  
in bark and seed  
bivouac on the moon

the side we can't see  
where atheists come  
back to life among  
amazing mirrors

the void of space  
makes music too  
there are no roads yet  
all seeing and no going

all knowing  
and never being done  
our doubting hands  
oily with ritual.

16 December 2011

= = = = =

Little truths

pants cuffs wet

birdshit on a stone bench

autumn end all

their bodies perfect

snug in your mind.

16 December 2011

= = = = =

So many things  
turns out can't forget.  
Inks has a little more memory  
but it is death for a word to be wet.

And when all this has been forgotten  
all this will still be true  
all we ever are is contradictions  
of an undiscovered rule.

16 December 2011



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Messenger juice  
arbitrary tables  
come down from the mountain  
again and again

till finally a law to live with  
shimmers on the stone  
a law I can call you.

16 December 2011

## **WHY POETRY INSISTS ON DEALING WITH THE SAME OLD THINGS**

Tree: something bigger than we are that we didn't build.

Mountain: even bigger, that we did not make.

Flower: something that comes by itself.

Wind: something that comes and goes.

River: takes everything away and still is here.

Sea: constantly coming towards us and never leaves.

16 December 2011

= = = = =

The need to wash.

We come soiled  
through the world.

To soil: to bring something  
in contact with the earth,  
the dirt beneath our feet  
or the dirt that comes out of us,  
the numbers, the things  
we dare to think. The words.

To come in contact with the earth  
pollutes. The farmer  
is doomed. Environment kills.

2.

But does a fish  
wash? Mites  
and sea-lice  
vex the scales.

But they are people  
too. What is it  
about water  
that is always clean?

3.

We hunted  
we poured  
the blood of what  
we killed to eat  
solemnly onto the ground,  
we fed the earth  
and pulled nothing out  
except what grew to us  
by itself, of itself  
came to our hands.  
Soil in those days  
was soul, was precious  
skin, delicate, due.

4.

Find all the letters of my longest name  
in chemicals your father carried  
down into the mines to hide. Falun.  
where the lover waits, a crystal man  
undisturbed by time. How can we  
ever cure ourselves of now?

5.

We are washed in history  
soiled by memory,  
memory comes out of what happens.

Apocalypse answers us: be  
washed in the blood  
blood of the lamb  
marks us, we are the pure  
who never hurt the earth,  
pure Brahmins, flamens,  
a smear of blood on our door,  
the Death Dealer passes us  
by. As if to say a crow  
picks at what we've left.

17 December 2011

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Not everybody likes to run.  
The road gets where it's going  
without a single movement.  
Be like the road. Get there  
without moving. Be there now.

17 December 2011