

2-2014

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rabbit rabbit she cried because the month began  
and we are citizens of time bien sûr but really!  
expostulation is as bracing as a cup of Assam  
with the tigers growling nearby in your mind  
o I delight to hear such travesties of truth  
as old Omeros conferred on his pale Greeks

before dusky Asians came sexy out of Lydia  
where rivers run with gold but no fish to eat  
hence the parable of Midas and his golden fingertips  
for everything we think becomes commodity  
and money makes a prisoner of mind o god and  
Kant and Fichte and Hegel are just music,

and music means nothing but Nietzsche *means*  
I rest my case in those piquant palabras  
that wake me mornings with a taste of sugar  
granulated like sunlight on this week-old snow  
is this enough for me to believe, philosophy  
is the symphony of men who can't carry a tune

**blink (the last man blinks) blank balance sheet  
the world is new Bruckner's 7<sup>th</sup> is alive and now  
try to learn that green forever the same rabbit  
the pillow sweaty from sleep how hard we work  
to muscle through that other consciousness  
and grip some of it to nibble when we wake**

**but when is that Our Lady of Intuitions  
where we conclude like a ship on a rock  
there are tendencies that do not know me  
(a kind of ruffle around the new-plowed field)  
conscious of your spelling a hint of underarm  
language is the working class's vengeance on the rich**

**we wrote this war too, we win by word  
and all the pyramids take off to heaven  
till every acre is a shadow of them  
why don't you advertise the moonlight  
that smells here better than anywhere else  
you thought it was just a glass of milk**

no, but I am, the engine idling, the train  
ready to north its way into vacancy  
I am the empty polar regions ear to ear  
thick with rock oil to keep the girls away  
leave me arctic sunlight and a bear  
until the stars come out to stab me

Back to life again mavourneen, a sea  
between my feet, my shadow topples  
over all your steeples, okay, no protest,  
only the lipid aftertaste of light  
you are you are most blessed in so moving  
ice dance of the frozen Hudson

hummocky and buttocky and almost free  
the one lane icebreakers kept open  
so the barges can bring the flame to Albany,  
god, we all are made of skin and not much else  
a hollow house with snow on the roof  
a crow lands on it and makes a few remarks

**you think I'm talking but the wind knows better  
the name of our discourse is transportation  
even now a diesel horn honks southly  
yes yes I'm getting somewhere  
just like the train from Rochester  
and it will be a city wherever I stop**

**and I will be your mother, metropole,  
my fetid breath your blue cathedral,  
those sins your mothers explain  
to pass winter nights through your mind,  
the greatest mystery of all is sleep,  
the why of it and the someday of why not**

**so it ends at Glastonbury after all  
in early spring snow trudged up the Tor  
that modest mountain starts below the sea  
and reaches to the nearest star,  
St. Michael's Tower links both together  
an arrow of light comes down and replaces the spine**

**the only weapon we have in our war with heaven  
you lift it whenever you open your mouth  
to give or chant melisma or to forgive  
when I build a city I'll you for canals  
so full of life you make the meager sunlight  
and every shadow comes alive with counterglow**

**(1 February 2014)**

agnosis the best treatment in most cases  
case means fall, fall means happen  
happen means chance and there's no such thing  
I rest my case *im Kristall dein Fall*  
cries the weird old woman to the poor young man  
my first Anselm ere Hollo came from Bothnia

or any other word that fits Homer's meter  
he's a Baltic, too, a ship foundering on land  
much snow has melted over one mild night  
fear of river pirates Chinese paper lanterns  
I'm telling you the kind of truth retired  
Brits tell on Caribbean verandas

o history, you can read me in any book  
these words I pilfered from the lexicon  
so you won't see the scum of handsoap on the sink  
wouldn't hear the telltale finches of high noon  
squealing from the bird clock on the wall  
and you'd forgive me for one whole life

get me ready for another, a house  
holds almost everything, I give you  
everything something, wooden blocks  
sufficed me as a child, A especially  
and B and C, blue gouges fit together  
build them my fingers and forget the war

but the puzzle thing comes back  
Orpheus caught between his need  
and her *identity, ohime ! identity*  
is the mother of needs but not  
necessity, there's always something wilful  
in being somebody in particular

me for instance, my shadow cast  
by porchlight on the snow, forgive me,  
I can resist being in a body, even mine,  
word-soaked adventurer with wind up his sleeve  
and in the straits twixt north and south the dolphin Jack  
spared the life of many mariners, but me



**I'd never go to sea, once was enough, came here  
over the addictive Atlantic I still drink  
when I can but never walk again that deck  
speak unFrench and think I'm on my way home  
because no language has a word for house  
any more than English has a word for you**

**(2 February 2014)**

what it looks to soon will be  
to *seize before* is make it so  
remember instead not the picture but what it said  
in me as I turned to look, gather to me  
it cried out to the lens in all of us  
*see me into your own dark, I am yours*

I had not yet begun to snow, a cougar  
walked later over the hill above the yard  
they have so many names, years,  
they have fire in their eyes, and diamonds  
often in their safe-deposit boxes, glisten  
on the edges of their prayer books

gold is greasy nowadays, the ground  
is asking for it, weather is always an answer,  
some Utah Protestants are praying for rain  
one week this song has worked  
I embarrass myself with particulars  
need the argent fountain of sheer must

**did you say childhood or wildwood  
did you say caravan or yet again  
lick my ears clean o lordly lady  
so I can hear the consonants divide  
sacred breath cleaves or makes them cleave  
and did you say weather or a feather**

**spend a whole life listening and get it wrong  
*bu hao*, this is New Year's I'll never know your name  
dim sum in paradise busy street outside  
invisible diners plucking palpable food  
to be served dinner is to disappear  
only the waiters are there the deep *personnel***

**for them we are phantoms, we eat out for them  
we sit invisible with joyful wallets,  
braced by their *stronger existence*,  
those eyes-away girls and wifty boys who carry  
heavy plates and beefy arguments around the room,  
we sheep look up and think we're fed**

**the servers are the only people here, we vanish  
into agency, chat and chomp and soon are gone,  
oh what a bistro this sad earth is  
and winter waits outside, a week of this  
no fins no feathers just a clock remarking  
evening news from Budapest catch a word or two**

**it will be over soon they say the snow  
and say the pine tree shelters in the mist  
I will not go where such things live  
angry partisans belonging to their guns,  
I use the simplest words I can  
because my journey up the river is so long**

**I'd give all this to drink the light  
among the trees thicker, it grows the snow  
Faust gets young again with strength enough  
to be hurt again by what he thought was done  
but nothing's there and nothing's then,  
old age is a permanent condition in some men**

**(3 February 2014)**

**“you are or will be the Prince Nova  
who changes the way we do the world”  
(dreamt, in Armenian, before woke  
into sun on snow with more to come)  
(end of my history of the American Republic)  
but who is this prince I or another must be?**

**who knows to whom a dream is talking  
if I swam it would be against the current  
sub-heroic but it functions this way  
with any old book for my larder  
and a man shoveling snow quietly outside  
remember that lawn we saw the northern lights?**

**I am not finished with this form  
*who pulls me downe?* Irony of rapture  
we give so little and get everything  
each one a springboard to the next  
but there is a cenote in this world  
where lost things sink to rise in their time**

like Easter through the snow-laced trees  
yes something is coming miracle or otherwise  
the counting numbers never get you there  
a quiet moment's Eden enough, the four  
rivers of it or what the compass shows —  
to move at all is to lose your direction

certainly tried to tell the road  
from the river the moongate from the sea  
trampled snow smell of a horse  
the Prince has fallen — now you know he's a prince —  
raptors busy in the lower air, where Greeks  
were mostly free of gods, safe from all but self

so be contrary all you choose  
the secret name of this is everything  
help the prince up from the mire  
avoiding the hoofsteps of his horse-machine  
put a word in his mouth and set him loose  
now comes the revolution the voice set free

**and all those rights you dreamed you had  
your body all your own with what it does,  
hollow network of a vast enclosure  
fence round nada but how the nada gleams  
don't you sometimes wish you were  
the only one the language means**

**but the frost of snow on the yew trees  
everybody wants to get into the idea  
Japanese *No* mask you carry in your eyes  
ready for the hour of disguise  
when a hand reaches out and makes a sign  
your skin makes sense of before the mind**

**(4 February 2014)**

**let me be light  
and be of use to dark around me  
let me learn something  
and give it to you let me  
be you as much as we can  
until the sacred difference sleeps.**

**5 February 2014**



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**The beauty of film (as earlier the still not fully grasped beauty of photography) back to him and him and him and is that it frees us from plot contrivance, and grants us pure presence, the presence from which everything can come.**

**We no longer need to see what people did. (All narrative is *past* by nature.) We need to see what people are.**

\*

**A great story yields a single moment.**

**6 February 2014**

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**But is there nothing left to tell  
a crumb of bread  
left between two empty glasses  
last testimony of love**

**yes I use those words  
the way the world uses opera  
to take what joy it can  
from endless grief.**

**6 February 2014**

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**Because of me this spirit  
understands all islands as this one  
*the sea is same*  
and grinds us into identity.  
So the palm by your house  
is my yew tree  
scripted with snow.  
Because the only place there is is here.**

**6 February 2014**

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**Cast by number on the long coast  
sand in his teeth and salty-eyed  
there was a reason. Apollo meant  
a man alone on the beach, particular,  
not specially analytic, maybe even  
humming a tune. Like you or me  
but not like both of us.**

**Everything is coming to tell.**

**Then there are frequencies  
when the white spider chooses its house  
between the poet and her song  
like a bar at midnight ready to begin.  
Once there were children in that world —  
try to be lucid and calm, the hospital  
is on its way, bankrupt but still busy,  
money only seems to be involved.  
Vast buildings stand unoccupied  
and the homeless come back,  
where have you all been  
behind shuttered windows of the lazaretto?**

**And *who* have you been, more to the point —  
and why do I find menacing  
but I used to find bracing,  
a cold night, fierce sun on snow?  
Is the whole world just an adjective?  
My itchy skin, your diamond earrings?**

**7 February 2014**

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**This will wake you up  
a white truck running through the snow  
are you sure? Are you pure?**

**It seems to me religion is all about  
a kind of organized waiting —  
you feel it in the crowded church,  
they come to wait for mass to be over,  
come for a sermon they can't wait to end,  
and all the words referring in so many  
languages to elsewhere and some  
other day and never now.  
Because there is no now anymore.  
Of the white truck is long gone.**

**7 February 2014**