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PRAYER

Send the location
to the space it's supposed to be
then I'll find it there
if I get where I'm supposed to know
my legs are going—
a long slow green hill down
to the thin crossroads
my robe playing in the wind
I have been trudging for years
now I am almost there
if there has gotten there too
to be for me and my sandals
if no one distracted there along its way
or told there to be another place
another time where I can't come
o let now for once be now
and this place at hand
I see now over the slip of the hill.

13 February 2011

=====

So it feels to be among earth
in a blue day walking alone
none of it ever easy.

13.II.11

FRAMEWORK:

an iron coatrack
from the garment district on wheels

Skin: bathrobes (blue, buff, spotted)
draped over it

Action: it rolls towards us very fast.
It is invincible.

Try to film it before it devours you.
Reality is the hungriest of all beasts
especially in dream, that art form
marooned in your imprisoning sleep.

13 February 2011

THIRTEEN

Thirteen men
and a woman walking
the woman is a town
or a tower outside town

thirteen men and a woman
talking in a little room
the woman is what they say
when they whisper eagerly

thirteen men in a boat
with a woman on a lake
the woman is not the water
the woman tells them what to do

thirteen men listening
to a woman not talking
on a road between
a lake and the city

thirteen men
stare into the sky
the woman is the sky
but the men are listening.

13 February 2011

=====

I don't have to be nice anymore?

Then how can I be me?

I am the one who means you well—

trust me and you'll find

pain enough in my tendresse.

13 February 2011

OUR LOVE: a Valentine for Charlotte

Why should we be as any other is?
Movements in the air declare
and listening is all. Said it all before
but listening changes the word heard
depending on its own when and how.

There's no why to it, it just is
and then it hears. Movement
makes things mean, a mind
has to come and see and stay and still
keep moving.

That's where you
come in, the particular
once would have said flower, now
no flowers are one says a self
a certainty a person almost understood

but this is more than there could be
in any simple is, it simply is.

14 February 2011

A VALENTINE FOR CHARLOTTE

Longing to write something different to you
that really says something special about you
after all the wonderful things about you
that everybody knows but maybe doesn't tell you
enough I wonder how to. Being good to you
is how I mean to live, trying to bring you
things you like and letting them tell you
how very much and why I love you
and make that telling different for you
from what I write for a living and make this word just for you.

14 February 2011

THE POPULATION

Every person you ever met
lives inside you now
each one at the living center
sun of a planetary system built
out around him or her
all through you. The more
contact you had with them
the more space they take up
inside you. So the totality
of all those systems amounts to
your body—the cells of it
all through you living,
each entity, each own world
is present in its distinct
location in you. Man in your wrist
a wife in your knee. Forever.
You meet them and they are you.
You are an archive of your encounters
and all of them are who you are.

14 February 2011

= = = = =

Because of enough
there is more.

The prepositions are
a little like serpents
not necessarily venomous
not necessarily not.

Between words travelling
weaving with green purport to
link. beget, expel, belong.

Mill on the Floss Catcher in the Rye Call of the Wild—
never read a book that sneaks a preposition past you.

It'll be all relationship and no material
no meat in the platter no stuff.

Prepositions nuke stuff.

14 February 2011

[= = = = =

Will I ever finish my work?

Quando fiam uti Kelly done?]

14.II.11

= = = = =

There should be joy in the system
and a taste of truth
like storm in the forest
lianas slumping over tigers
and a painter watching

because there *is* a girl back home
and we are never done with
coming on to one another

until the moon breaks
and all that juice of indoor mistletoe
slops down on our glad heads
and the skull inside the skin rejoices

for every skeleton is white
and even a child untutored can
in any graveyard hear them sing
soft tunes to bring the moon to life again.

15 February 2011

== = ==

Be needy, be greedy
examine the five-dollar bill

this paper is worth more than itself—
be like that, just give yourself away.

15 February 2011

= = = = =

And when we finally get to Rome
more killing, more tearing people in love
away from one another. Upriver the white sow
sleeps on the muddy banks and lives forever,
our motorboats and Indian canoes
struggle upstream and float back down
and nothing changes. Trees full of poison
we think into their sap. We fuel snakes
with venom. Our hands can't forget
the slippery feel of blood, life
of the other, the murdered brother—
Romulus *was* Remus. A man kills
the lover and the brother in himself
to do what a nation means to become.

15 February 2011
(listening to *Les Troyens*)

= = = = =

--Show me please just one glimpse of my former life, or any of my previous lives.

--Look out the window—anything you see alive out there you’ve been. They have been you, each of them has said ‘me’ and meant you. Look at what that life out there is doing—you did that too. And they, all of them, may be like you now, someday.

--That doesn’t tell me much about me, me in particular.

--It tells you everything about ‘me’. ‘Me’ is a motel in dangerous country, with pretty scenery and sinister townspeople. You’ll check out soon—what then?

--I guess that’s what I really want to know...

--You don’t know where and what you’ve already been, how can you know where you haven’t been, where you haven’t even existed yet?

But there was no window, and the conversation dissolved into someone’s own head, like any dream.

16 February 2011

= = = = =

There could have been more. A trench
dug around the camp, footsteps deep in mud.
The birds are back again. “They had left me
I thought all alone.” “Not you alone
but all of us.” “And now I’m me again!”
“Exactly.” It fills up with water in the night
there must be a spring. At least
we have water but we have to let it settle.
The silt sifts out. “Boil it, do you?” “Some.
Fire is expensive. We take our chances.”
“Most people do.” “The birds
are back this morning.” “Yes, you said.”

16 February 2011

= = = = =

Will they tell me what I need,
a word's a thing and on it feed?
Will they roast the sheep again
and lay it gently mounded on
saffroned rice in my once gaudy tent
so that I eat with one hand
and think with the other? Calamus!
You also loved me like a son
and took my hand as we were dozing
on the banquette at the back of the old
last train to Hartford, where tents
are few and the sheep are still alive
if there at all. Calamus, a fountain pen,
a band of youth, a gay dream,
journey, all the ingredients for crime
or other love. I am some pasha
of something, fingers greasy with fat.

16 February 2011

= = = = =

Everything says different. Stars
are made of sparrows, the ones
that fall by day. The alphabet
was the biggest accident,
he caught it, she taught it, we
interpret it all night long.
Five thousand years we get it wrong.

16 February 2011

= = = = =

What do we even know
from the way it began?
A tree full of itching
stags come down to rub on it—
who benefits? Spinoza
in a dream reached up
cut a cloud with a knife
and it bled and the blood
squirmed into letters in a book
but who could read that book?
They were in the alphabet
angels use when they scribble
secret billets-doux to demons.
I waited all day for the answer
then it came: a thin envelope
postmarked in Hell—“remember
everything I say, never trouble
to understand it.” For a man like me
that in itself is a kind of liberty.

16 February 2011

POLONAISE

1.

And in the great palace
Polish women dance
there is a special contour
to them, a special color

the whole world clad in skin.

2.

A man can rush through the dancers
crying out language
without rising from his sickbed—
we are all invalids
stricken with desire
moveless in remorse.

17 February 2011

= = = = =

If ever anything were left from
all the pictures I have seen
I would take one home: Orion's
belt, a star at the tip
of the strap—café
in Zurich, beautiful
people leaning on the bar.

17 February 2011