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Where are we now?

Blame it on somebody,

blame it on Phil.

The winter was too big.

the giant horses have

eaten all the rain.

22 February 2014

MORE HORSES

**Graminivorous demons
and so big! Imagine
yourself on one of them
right now, thighs
trembling, squeezing hard
for dear life. your breath
unconsciously taking on
the deep rhythm of
the horse's breath—
secret of all life:
breathe the other.
Then the move begins,
the up that is forward
also, for no action is
single only, every has
its reciprocal, now breathe
me in asnd understand
(secret of science, there
is nothing to understand
not even this). Home sore,
smelling of horse, you**

**cry out gaily I'm home!
but it isn't and you're not.
No place a beast can
take you is anywhere but
there, in the danger,
the out there, the wind
hooting and the grass
lying down at your feet,
the terribilità, God
hidden in everything
but your head in your hands.
Secret of travel: there is
no going back, it is mortal
to be out of space at last.
Only the dead come back.**

22 February 2014

WOMAN ON HORSEBACK, AFTER KANDINSKY

1.

**In paddock boots in straw
basketed shoulders
Hungarian lanyard
sweater tied around the
waist, wool, scarlet,
snowflakes, reindeer,
going somewhere, tribal
thought between the eyes
come back to remember
whet the blade between
any and every else
is what I mean, the start
leaves us weltering
behind, roadbed, garlic
tree, that litte stiff stem
among the cloves, that
for a coat of arms, brick
piled on brick until.**

2.

Until what. Semaphore
was my favorite word
and railway train and engineer,
caboose was an embarrassment
like girdles and aunts
because in those days marriage
was never two people alone.
Razor blade, for instance,
penwiper, what happens
when you're old again after
all those years of being
somebody else, is that magic
or just a glass of milk?
Your hair or a stranger?
Thrice the striped ballpoint
failed, the woman bent
and laid her hand along me
and whispered decencies.
So many votaries of just one
Titania, and all of them worthy
of the lichenous caress

of your clingable remarks.

3.

**All I have done in this
life is write a book of prayers,
I leave the theology to you,
aim them at any deity you choose.
For I was wounded at Thermopylae,
wasn't counted, crawled home,
changed my name, my language
and here I am looking at you
a little reproachfully my empty lap.
For there were giants in the earth
in those days, not men not women
but big businesses stumbling around
with mouths made of money
and feet made of all the rest of us.
I was wounded in every war,
a seat saved for me in the métro,
crows in the sky, a painting
by Constable. from the trees
we milk the light. A stream**

**understands us. Mother
I say to the glass of water.**

4.

**Hard as I listen I can't hear
her say Son to me but something does
there are almonds crackling
with sugar coating, we suck them
at weddings and get sick a little
not enough to vomit just to feel
the woeful intimacy of the flesh
too vividly inside, the way lovers
used to feel before the war.**

[22 February 2014]

**Exhaustion plays a role in it
but we still don't know the play.
Apple street? The three codgers
sneak into paradise? The artful
strumpet on her back for truth?
Kedgeriee for breakfast. Your tiger
has more stripes than mine. Love
abounding in favelas? Moscow
on my mind? Every day a novel.
Every heartbeat a dream of its own.**

5.

Pasquinade they used to call it.

**Wrap your fish in the Daily Mirror
when you still had one. Green wine
over the mountain. The sheep stand
waiting for you to understand them,
behold their industry, the quiet
passacaglia of their little teeth.**

**And so on, till we get there again
and recognize the woman at the desk
our doctor. Sorry I'm late. You always
are. I know, I'm sorry. Not sorry enough.**

**How can I mend my ways. Neglect
all things save epistemology alone.**

How severe you look. My pulse is slow.

**Has the man come in yet, the one
who's going to make music for our show?**

**No joke in matter. Or is there, as René
Rilke used to say, a smile in substance?**

I stroke the smooth fidelity of stone.

6.

So back on your horse
ready to flee. You're
trifling with me. But
do you like it? What's
to like or what's to eat,
a traveler with animal
is a difficult book.

Read with a rasp, sleep
in a parenthesis, the French
sang you how to bracket—

and in all the great city

that whole night

only one dog barked,

but it was white

she quoted from a backyard

half-cracked greenhouse roof

philosopher whose statue

frowns upon the Quai de Reves

waiting for you to make

some snarky commentary

on the book he never should

have unwritten but he did.

**And now the whole thing
lodges in your head only,
a song you can't stop hearing
but you've forgotten all the words.
What else could wisdom be like?**

**7.
So wind down and don't worry—
species come and go, the individual
is eternal. That's what we know
if dimly, the sweater worn low
around the hips because the arms
are warm enough in sun so what
did your mother tell you of the war?
Did she distinguish the music
from the milk, the children
hiding in the leaves (remember
Tchelitchev all of a sudden)
from the little lead animals your
father brought you home
some nights and each one taught you
how to be that, just that, a tiny**

**ostrich on skinny dark pink legs,
a rhino with a hole in his side,
in my whole life I never ever
learned anything more than this.**

23 February 2014

=====

**Noises in the night
you think are the house
or someone in the house
the quiet house**

**and then you realize the sounds
all are coming from you—
a tendon stretching, your hair
slipping on the pillow**

**that jaw clicking in its socket,
a tiny turbulence
in the intestines, blood
coursing by your ear.**

**What if everything I hear
or smell or see or feel
all comes from me
and my poor sleepy head**

**projects it outward
to make a world
of things to fear
or love or satisfy**

with some movement of the heart?

24 February 2014

*Call it a text not a poem—
then nobody gets hurt.*

=====

**Voice on answering machine
too far away to recognize,
the phone too far away to reach
before it stops
ringing and starts talking.
Language is distance,
a far-off hilltop with
what looks like one
bare tree on top of it.
Or is it you? Or maybe
everything is too far away
and that is the nature of language.**

24 February 2014

=====

Being close to time

καιρος the Right Time

means no time at all,

just now.

If it doesn't happen

now, there is no is.

I learned this from a Greek

I took him to be from his language

sitting on a cloud and eating a book.

And his blood also was spilled for us.

25 February 2014

THE AVATARS

**are names we know
for someone we don't,**

**someones always somewhere
nameless by nature**

like the best in us all.

25 February 2014

WHERE THE GIFT GOES

**In the penumbra of the dwindling
ecclesia, shadow of the pope
grieving in the music of his apartness
quem elegit Dominus and then
the firestorm of actual consequences
out there where all the theories end
in human misery.**

**They forgive
sins of the flesh not of the mind
and yet all law is founded on
the inviolability of the body,
sanctity?**

**No, the breeding machine intact,
the body's social value,
its usefulness
to society not to itself.**

**But law understands a corporation
as a bodyment of a body**

**that exists for its own sake
not for society,
 pray in the night
candled with hope,
save us from law.**

26 February 2014

=====

Don't think about it.

It disappears

when you look at it

later. Who knows

where and whether

in the first place

anything was.

Do you see it

now? Does it

cast a shadow?

I live beside it

and never have.

26 February 2014

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Not a matter of time.

Space

just hasn't gotten here yet.

26.II.14