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1.

The mercy means it
as well it might.
Drowned Somerset.
Parched Disneyland.
This canto celebrates
the sentimental names
my child loves me with
Abandon. I've been done. Aladdin.
The law is hidden in the stone.
In every stone for Christ's sake
that floats above us midsummer eve
butterfly intransigence,
love, did you ever
will a flower?

Raisin

Street was *raison*
once upon no time,
we Irish made
short work of reason —
but with raisins

**we can bake scones
or soak in whiskey
for winter tea.**

**For winter
never ends around here,
the ice on the Neva,
even the Dnepr far South
choked with white dreams,
forgive my vocabulary
it's all I have
to offer in a poor man's mouth —
and if you're born poor
you're poor all your life
no matter how many dollars you have —
the smell of poverty never leaves,
likewise the juniper aroma of born rich,
turn it off and turn it back on
reboot the senses
in the springtime way
the soap of godly presence
washes doubt away —
this is your skin on my hand.**

2,

**Polymer means rabid shareholders,
America starts across the river
this mini-continent of ours
—from Maine to the Hudson,
the St. Lawrence to Long Island Sound —
is not America, or not yet.**

**America is always across the river,
America can never be here
with all those angry people,
I take my stand loud
on this rowboat republic,
this transparent fantasy of a place,
neither West nor East and never South,
but what are we with our
French and Portuguese
our little Latin and less droits de l'homme,
my dead grandmother taught me
English in the cradle.**

3.

The sound must come from far away.

We had a Sun once in our skies,

a customhouse on every corner

a borderguard at the entry to the mind —

how deep his sleep in that fur collar

untroubled even by Kafka's fleas ! —

no need to make us tremble in the wilderness

a morning takes care of itself,

fried egg sunrise in cloud

deep lovable imagery of the only

life life we dare to have,

and there he is with his 'we' again

agent of a vanished state, Ottoman

ambassador. envoy from the Khan,

I make home movies

in the old-fashioned mind,

colors faded to begin with but oh

her white bathing suit at Rockaway

before I ever learned to see

the images were waiting there for me

— and there he is with his 'me' again.

27 February 2014

THE SHADOW

**The ambiguity
pervades language**

to live to love

The Other is the one *beside* me.

**It is not good for woman to be alone
so she took man from inside herself.**

**It is not good for man or woman to be alone
so they took the shadow of themselves,
the shadow is the one always beside me,**

and man took the Other out of his side.

**We are taken from each other's shadows,
born of the other into a strange sense of self.**

**I thought it was Eve, or Life, or Love,
or Eve was Adam's brother**

**but they told me the letters were all wrong,
only sounded that way to someone
who did not know the language.**

**I do not know language
but I try to let it know me.
I try to let love and live and Eve and life be beside me,**

I try to take Eve out of my side.

2.

**Live means let everyone live.
I can't live if they don't live.
I think of Donne, every death diminishes me—
I can live only as long as the other does.**

3.

**Do you want to know what I really am?
I am the shadow I cast on the ground—
walk through me and you become part of me
and I of you. And we both go free.**

28 February 2014

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**Start something else
while you can.
There is dread
to be done,
a haiku and a half,
trout on your line,
March over the Hill
and April sleeping,
I miss her breasts —
what a thing to say.
No I mean the ex-
uberance of springtime
that gives way,
always gives way
and every season grieves
for her, the one who
spoke herself away.**

28 February 2014.

