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To meet the thing that tells me
to meet at last the thing that tells me
or turn round in my tangled words some morning
and face the light that casts of me such shadows
I walk forward ever making—
would it all go dark then?

I have watched so many balefires
my pages sooty from corpse fat
trying to scrub them into decency
by mere music—

I don't read anything anymore.
I give the language back.

22 February 2012

= = = = =

If anybody looks for me
they'll find me here
among my special holy books
the blue hydrangeas
the shadow of a woman
wild roses on the seaside rocks.

22 February 2012

=====

Years of agency
never decided
now tangled deep
in everywhen no
changes again again.

22 February 2012

= = = = =

Little less with changes
or a sparrow's uplift
today by the water

water came first after fire

where did the photons come from
that broke your house
and let the light in

the dragon of desire
Lady with no windows
there would be no world
I will never speak from experience
I am a mirror and I tell you true
(the bird is flying now)
but we as we are lost

in comfortable knowing-
do they smell water in the night?
Do any of them really believe what they know?

22 February 2012

=====

What is the DNA of fire?

Tell me, candle,
who lit this flame?

22.II.12

= = = = =

Branches on no
tree support
me one song

yellow bus abandons us
it is the terrible
no place we are

Why is home
always so far
let me off this country

it bends the mind from things
into obeying routines

this schoolchild's song
an adult sings.

23 February 2012

= = = = =

No rain but road looks wet
what does it mean
to infer the actual—

just a shadow just a bus
just rain pelting on the sunporch roof

just something else
I'm born to celebrate
free so no one listens.

23 February 2012

=====

Sun out blue
sky green
ready to pounce.

23.II.12

= = = = =

after a line of Rilke

Bird shout

the shield of spring
banged into grey light
to fetch the sun up
someone has to—

out of the corner in the mind
where I feel at home
shady place and quiet

peopled with images
shaped long ago
by my eyes or another's

I don't know how
to write this quiet
don't know either
how to keep it

between word and word
the gulf the trench
abyssal plain the moat
the broken drawbridge

the river on fire

to force “the last sweetness”

into the dry word

trembling in no mind.

23 February 2012

THREE HOMILIES

I.

Did they came to call me
were they wrong too the time
had no light yet snow
went by *a band of white music*
moved northeast across the county
woke whom? Because identity
is not easy in the morning. Even now
I'm only beginning to forget my way
and wander into waking. But called
or not called the self is present.*

* A phrase heard ago about another god
not the one we pray to on bended me.

II.

Dogs howl outside the tent
pretend they have the moon in their teeth
the patient Mother slightly blurry
features of the child. There is no father
yet, father is a later geological mistake
a tardy arrival in the Noocene.
And in the basement lunchroom of the school
frantic children whisper to each other
the strange thing they've just learned,
the sperm of Æthiopians is black.[†]

[†] Peril of reading the classics—
a shaman with a rose explained it to me
as she healed my hands
sore from so little touch.

III.

And why shouldn't snow be allowed
it's made of now
like any child or maybe

and maybe father is on the way too
stalking down the big rock
where he's been conniving with crazy gods

trying to make one sane religion
a jihad against selfishness
to be alone with other people

all other people and a golden rooster[‡] on the roof.

24 February 2012

[‡] This bird takes fire away
and turns it into music of a sort
wakes everybody up but never
never tells you what to do.

TEXTS FOR *ORESTES*

PYL:

Like any great man
Oedipus made his own decisions—
gut feelings, tips
of his fingers.
And these brought him to the top
then toppled him.
We rise and fall through feeling—

XO:

But why are you telling me all this?
I need to know about your Orestes.

PYL:

Yes, he is mine, you're right for once.
My point is that Orestes
had no feelings of his own,
only necessity's blunt persuasions,
only duty, contract, a razor
to his throat, the croaking
of the fates his only birdsong.
And morning is as driven as the night.

XO:

But he killed his. . .

PYL:

He never slew.
Void of feelings
like the Moon
when she forms aspects
with no other planet
and is called Void of Course,
so he was void
but lived instead his sister's dream.

XO:

Then why did the Furies so pursue him?

PYL:

Because he did not live his own,
own dreams, own feelings.

XO:

So he was not a great man?

PYL:

He was more than great.
He was almost good.
He killed the *mother in him*—
the womb of feeling.

XO:

Of course the Furies would hate that,
since feelings are their weapons
that lead us to those evil deeds
for which they punish us.
How could they exist in a kindly world?

PYL:

You reason well about his sinless sin.

XO:

Wait, though, your explanations of him
are coming before his story—
what did he actually do?
And didn't he flee at last
for mercy to the undying goddess?

PYL:

Who turned him over
to you, or people like you,
humans in the city—
and the city spared him.

XO:

Do you blame us for our mercy?

PYL:

No blame. But it was not mercy,
it was a rarer thing, a justice understanding.
The city is the final arbiter.

XO:

Metropolis they call us—
mother city city mother.

PYL:

Yes, a city is a man's other mother.
No matter how far he goes
or in what arctic wilderness
or jungle swelter he finds around him
a man from the city
is always in the city.
The city is the mother in him.

XO:

And did he kill that mother too?

PYL:

Here he is,
he staggers towards us,
towards me, here he comes
though his vocation now
is running away—
he comes to me though,

I am the one love links him
, the one who loves him.

XO:

You sound as if your love
is tempered with some other feeling,
the vinegar he made you sip,
some honey he denies you...?

PYL:

The honey he leaves on my lips.
He denies me nothing—
even his sister he tried to share with me
to bring us closer,
I have that letter in my pocket now,
carry it as my talisman
against ever forgetting how much he shares.

[*Enter* ORESTES]

XO:

There you are, you busy traveler,
you come back to us again—
what judgment, what forgiveness
what consolation do you crave
from us now?

OR:

I am one who's always wanting less.
I have so many streets,
the streets are wrapped around me
and roads run through my body
and when I sleep, my dreams are fugitive.

XO:

It is standard for a fugitive to flee.

OR:

Bless you for being obvious,
the sober banality that is a city's
theology! But nothing about me
is normal—or maybe you're
right in a way, I am normal in reverse,
I am the reciprocal of real.
I am a man turned inside out.

PYL:

Don't wear yourself out
describing yourself
accommodating your language
to their prejudices,
your strength has always been
that nobody really knows you—
you are safest in their ignorance.

And for all your talk about yourself
you know no more than anybody else.

XO:

He means the city is a mother with closed eyes.

OR:

Enough about mothers!
How many do I have to kill?

XO:

Your friend here says you killed no woman
but mybe killed some mother part in you...

OR:

(tenderly) My dear friend...

(severely) But madness talks the way you people talk,
changing the clear meanings of simple words...

Impossible deeds... I killed.

I killed and have been tried for murder

before a jury here in Athens, and been acquitted
after a hung jury, freed by the president of the court,

the reasonable summoner, the goddess

who never dies. Who has no truck with death.

Her vote decided. The human voice

is sometimes not enough...

there was some technicality

I think, I don't know the law.

PYL:

The law knows you.

OR:

I came here for comfort,
for the one who really knows me.

(They embrace)

PYL:

We know each other—
the only way you can know yourself.

OR:

Wo ist meine Schwester?

PYL:

Sie wartet im Palast Klytaimnestras, wie immer. Wo sonst darf sie wohnen?.

OR:

Führe sie bitte zu mir—sie sah mich nicht noch rein.

PYL:

Rein? Was meinst du?

OR:

Später, spatter, ich erkläre...

XO: (*divided*)

Why do they speak foreign words?

So we don't understand.

But we know what they mean.

We know what must happen,

we know all that comes to be.

(*to Orestes:*)

Why were you speaking Thebish?

OR:

Why ask if you already know?

XO:

Asking is telling, asking is human, asking is Athens—
it is not pleasant to hear the voices of the wrong city.

OR:

No city is wrong.

No matter where I go

Athens is everywhere.

XO:

Fortunate youth!

OR:

Youth! How old you must be
to think me young,
I who have been among the living dead
and been born three times among you.

XO:

That's just personal, young man.
We are as old as the city—
the one you keep leaving,
keep finding.

25 February 2012