

2-2012

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## ORCHID

Hot pink of a spanked tush  
on porn pages glimpsed  
by middle-aged now Mister  
Eros. For everything grows old.  
And if I brought this flower home  
a day would kill it, or an hour,  
Time's red thumb squeezes  
gently but before you know it  
the petals are confetti and all  
that's left's a loopy framework  
dry and brittle, not unattractive  
in its spooky Gothic ruin way  
but where did the pink news go  
that drove the man and flower so?

26 February 2012

**(for ORESTES)**

EL:

It was a leper  
coming down the road,  
I didn't think he'd dare  
approach the tomb  
but he did. He stank.  
His straight black Asian  
hair lank on his face  
all pus and blankness,  
boiled eyes in the ruin  
of his face, his face  
just looked at me  
and a voice inside it said  
I am your brother  
who is dead. And me  
I must have fainted,  
slumped down on father's tomb  
he didn't dare reach out  
to steady me or break my fall,  
but the boy with him did,  
a clean boy, how could he stand  
being with such a comrade  
if that's what he was. I pulled  
myself together, asked the leper  
what it was he said. He said

I used to be your brother  
and started crying  
and suddenly I was crying too  
that's how I knew  
it was true. I sent away  
my troupe of mourners  
and sat down with him  
with what I judged a safe  
distance between us—  
but what is space, the body  
can read body from afar.  
I listened to the air between us.

OR:

They sent me to my uncle's town  
you know that part of my story  
and I was glad enough of the company  
I found there. That's where I met  
this Pylades, my dear cousin here.  
We grew together and love each other still.  
Without him I would not be.  
So there I was, a boy and growing older,  
but in every game I played,  
every race I ran, every girl  
or boy I laid hot hands on,  
I kept hearing the same law  
droning in my head, a flock

of priests and lawyers talking  
using my own breath, talking,  
barking vengeance, vengeance  
on those who killed your father.  
But I will never kill my mother.

26 February 2012

## TOY STORE

In the toy shop or the toys section of the big store age doesn't have to matter. It's all packaging and bright colors, mostly the primaries, plus the new American primary color, camouflage. It's all boxed and plastic shells, transparent as packaged air. What's inside is hardly different from what wraps it—same stuff, same painful feel in the fingers. Toys are made to hurt, A toy is the image of itself, but just the image, Cars you can't get inside, cars that don't go, dolls that don't breathe, A country of dead things in bright colors—fraudulent gifts we teach the young to want, then appease, so easy, their forged desires. Go meditate an hour in these aisles. Trickster government, shyster culture—even the balls they give boys to play withm the balls aren't even round.

26 February 2012

= = = = =

Morning coalition settling in  
birds embedded in the freaks of light  
gem chips in deep wood. A noise  
and then another teach me harmony,  
or try to. Gesualdo, mind uncomfortable  
as with shimmering repetitions too,  
dementia on the warpath. "Believe"  
this bird. The frenzied finches  
of noontime, the crow of always.  
And last night cold as it was the first  
owl. That's all the names I know.  
Sometimes I think that to say you  
is the same as saying everybody's name.

27 February 2012

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I think about it often  
to keep it from happening.  
Whatever it is.

To measure empathy  
is drinking from cupped palms.  
Most of it dribbles through  
  
what's left a little loves you.

27 February 2012



## MISSA SOLEMNIS

The whole liturgy  
—work of the people—  
subsumed into one  
ecstasy of violin  
only one in a million  
people could play.  
Men become angels,  
angels gods, gods  
become the mind.  
Only this one.  
I must become you.

27 February 2012

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Never till the rememberer  
answers back  
the insolence of time  
that shaggy dragon

snow on the mountains  
heartbreak heaven  
we have turned down

too many yhings to say  
entire me trillion  
is just the other side of town

a letter crossed out is just as beautiful.

27 February 2012

## TAKE-OUT

Carry the food home  
a flower somewhere else  
empty room a smell of roses  
you have your whole life  
right now.

27 February 2012

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A hint of something  
that almost got here  
almost got said.

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## The Cloud Mother

watching her pass over  
quick from the west—

news from the window,  
my other mind.

27 February 2012

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**The tower** on the hill.

Nil. Sunrise.

The world praying

to itself. All one

same mind.

28 February 2012

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This is local fact.  
Silo. Not so many  
anymore. Handful  
of wheat, pocket  
full of corn. Seeds  
need us. Bananas  
are the genus *Musa*,  
muse. Can't propagate  
themselves. Need us.  
To spread the word.

28 February 2012

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Something talking  
here that is not  
me. Bright morning  
specter, speaks.

28 February 2012



= = = = =

It was standing on the station  
and the river went by. Amazon  
from which the future flows.  
Ready soon the raft of us.

The insistent nakedness  
of water. Trickery of light.  
Fate is simple, logs laced  
together. Rope chafe  
oil heals our hands. Oil  
of sugar ebriates our clumsy  
sleep. Wake up, river.  
Wave up, brown becoming.

Suppose together, suppose  
a palm grown up in front of us  
a cave mouth open ever in.  
Color of roses the light within.  
To go us in, is river. What  
light actually does: unnames  
me you so celebration.

You perch on my hand  
like some kind of bird. River  
means what no one can

ever tell. One look was enough.

It was another river

always but you held the

whole of it firm in your arms.

28 February 2012

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Hoofprints on heart  
you come to animal  
to be born some more

cars know nothing of speed  
speed is another being's body  
wind torn, shadows  
broken by its go.

I hide what I mean  
until I know it  
then you can ride it  
it's all meadow around

nothing harder than  
say now, frayed rope  
rips, a little yellow  
something slips out

It's not wise to believe me  
i mean something else  
all the time, a horse  
you have to carry.

28 February 2012



## SNOW DAY

Be as long as love needs  
sequins in the air  
a code for virgins  
new-minted masks  
from ancient Samothrace

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no one knows all the names  
not many children know their own  
or why, listen to me for once  
put on your mask  
a different face will see a different world.

29 February 2012

= = = = =

All we know of education  
is yellow buses,  
fuses snapping in their underwear

a feast of fasting  
colors fading from the day towards snow

things ache also animal  
logical truanicies  
*my bones so broken*

the reproaches are our liturgy—  
who are the people  
speaking so fondly in the cellar?

29 February 2012

## SAUGERTIES

Is it comfort or survival  
a truck or a canoe?  
We watched a solitary kayak  
flutter upstream, a little  
later came down to river,  
one little hull among  
the loons and mallards  
easily disturbed. What kind  
of animal paddles all alone?

29 February 2012

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As if it could be  
And long enough the other  
Dwells dwells in singleness  
Midchannel of the Ister  
Remorseless east  
From smallest arisings this  
One vast last occasion  
Falls—etymology of water

The unknown element  
That crouches lodges in  
The heart cave that busy place  
All shunting and repair  
The new is never

Never new enough  
O we went riding  
Over the other river  
North against its go  
To find a steeple carved  
Out of sunlight  
And all the grace of God  
A yellow wall.



= = = = =

When tenderly by beast renewed  
Your white and brown horses  
Sculpted into word but yesterday  
A horse of no color at all  
I sent to a loving friend for  
Her to ride because she lives so long  
Far from the hoofbeats of  
But in Vienna Sunday mornings easy  
Around and round Sankt Georg's dome  
The coacher's horses trot and whinny  
Seldom but when they do no bell  
Gonged for God can reach so high  
Or pierce the sleeper's footloose dreams  
And rouse the sun's hard hoof to stomp.

29 February 2012, Hopson

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Sailboat coming  
straight down the sky

you'll never know  
why I put up with you  
how the shrill of your complaining  
is like a quiet thoughtful  
answer the world gives me  
to my non-stop question

and nothing else stops  
ever, and the horizon  
is a pause in a long sentence  
a body is the patience  
to hear to the end—

this kind of boat can go through the sea  
this kind of boat is quiet fire.

29 February 2012