

1-2012

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How come this ease is  
travel or

the *odic* force

Reichenbach disclosed to us  
and we fell—

Atlantis, darling,  
was never closer than this moment—  
I see the leaf-brown winter ridge  
soil over shale and my stream beyond it,

we are metabolites of that dark process,  
alcohol or habit

we are island  
we “become what we behold”  
and the soft hands of the Green Muse  
squeeze the temples of the poet-man  
until he can think nothing but the vision  
she compels, say nothing but her green news,

Albert Maignan’s famous painting *La muse verte*  
explains her all-forgiving all-compelling smile

or we are the number Seven  
and naked people dance around us  
singing, slinging shafts of wood and saplings  
across the soft green meadow  
where we try to count  
the simple days,  
try to take the temperature of every living thing

while their sticks and branches clatter round our heads.  
In other words this is Atlantis,  
the drowned city  
sunken in its multitudes, the will  
of language lost in it,

the animal of us  
shivering in numberness.

6 January 2012

= = = = =

The sky fell from the sky  
you picked it up and became.

Never mind your fingers—  
the burns will heal...

*dreamt as such,*  
dawn, 7 January 2012

= = = = =

It waits for me there  
where the tree tops  
turn red at morning  
before money opens

and there is a condition  
or a time not a place,  
there is a resolution  
like a song heard twice

or three times before  
but you still can't  
quite get it right  
but you know it instantly

when the day sings.

7 January 2012

## LOOK ME IN THE EYE

I am weather

I am over there

not here

I am the one who is never

where you find me

other men are sleeping

it is like ink a little

sinks into the paper

it lasts as long as what it's written on—

inscription, the so

called actual

is one more word

and women are there too

often close to waking

it is a silence in them

wakes suddenly

I hear them stirring

I rub my eyes and watch them

between me and the so-called light.

7 January 2012

= = = = =

Or who has it ever been  
the listener?

Start in the middle of things  
the radiant the sacred  
now

You think white trucks go there too  
because you are road  
you think you can pay for it  
with kisses and tongue tips—

but when I see two people walking  
in middle distance towards some pines  
I see just muscles, their muscles  
the thick sturdy stride of meat

towards that bluff over the river—  
god, the weight of their bodies,  
I feel it here,

the mass. The sheer amount of them.

7 January 2012

= = = = =

I want to be between you.

There, simple as that, clear  
as a church steeple coming up at you  
across the plain, a village  
on the way to Amiens,  
coming beside you, going by.

But I mean to stay. To say.  
To cure that skin disease  
called being alone. There's no alone  
like being with people  
who don't know who you are.  
Don't know the how  
of your being.

They don't want to go to your church  
even though you have the gods they need.

I bow down to between.  
Bow down to my need.

. . . 7 January 2012



## SEEN THROUGH TREES

*from & for Susan*

Not sure if the trees are dead or just winterly. I'm never sure. That's itself the condition of being alive. People say 'dead certain,' and speak truer than they know. It is the famous ambiguity that sustains us, the dæmon of uncertainties. Winter gives a good approximation of the lifeless—but all the life is going on inside. In the trees.

In the trees is a complex phrase, isn't it—does it mean inside each tree or in the spaces between the trees. Where men and women walk, hunt, make love, gather mushrooms cautiously, sleep in hot siestas, stumble drunk in the dark. Or in the tree itself, the cambium, the sap, the upthrust. My god, what a force a tree is, or any grass, or any grow, to shove itself so far up above the surface, questing for what? Sunlight, the paltry scientists affirm. But I think we mean something different. The life is in the trees.

At most seasons, the woods around here at twilight seem to fill to a man's height with a curious pale insubstantial mild opacity, as if the fume of something rose equal from the ground. But it isn't smoke or mist, it is a kind of breath between the trees. I say the woods *seem* to do this because I've never been sure if what I'm talking about is something everybody sees, or is instead a dimming product of my eyesight. In any case, I see it. And it moves me. Because I think I am seeing the breath of trees, not at all the breath of earth but the breath of some mighty, obvious but obscure organism that hurls itself—with unimaginable difficulty—against gravity and stands high above us.

Look at the trees we say. Look between the trees I say. I see it in the trees, and don't really know what I see. I think of, am haunted by, the photo Susan showed me she had made. I saw deep black trees, dead or winter-smitten trees, who can tell, dark trees against or inside or rising towards me from just such a tremulous live opacity as I see breathing sometimes in the ordinary woods. In the picture, she has balanced the known and the unknown, the harsh certitude of the dark tree shapes, the unspoken hush of breath around the stems and stalks. She sees that twilight breath for me.

The picture. I see a picture. What I see is art, of course. Any picture is art, radical from the beginning. I think there was no time when there wasn't art. This picture makes it plain: art is the breath you can see. Art is the breath between one thing and another. Between the trees.

In other prints of the same picture (hence not the same picture) words and graven images appear, apparently behind some trees, in front of others. The images seem to be from a grammar book, perhaps of Middle Egyptian (I have one like that). The words are words, the glyphs are glyphs, and the trees are trees. Nobody is turning into somebody else. Our bodies are intact (at least in life, at least in art), safe from collage (which in my boyhood was a naughty word for fucking), safe from any inscription but their own. Own breath. Own muscle. Own wood.

So I look in memory again at the first picture. There's a Youtube video of Susan handing it to us, explaining. The picture is there, I can go back and check my memory. The picture amazes me. By what it sees and what it refuses to look at, refuses to explain. Black trees alive or dead rising from the living breath—that's

what it sees. Graphic, they'd say, as if these trees were letters scrawled with graphite on a rough ground. Lyric, they'd say, because if you look close you can hear the friction between dark solid and that pale translucency.

Behind our house some big trees have fallen too. Unchanged since our Labor Day hurricane that felled and scattered them, they lie athwart one another, just a pile of huge sticks, waiting their turn to be seen.

. . . 7 January 2012

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Once I saw a close-up of my face and thought at first it was a dog in the middle distance, a whole grey dog on a hillside but it was me. I am not like that but that is like me. Images are dangerous for this and other reasons. Faces, dogs, trees, trees that could be people biding their time, waiting for us. For me. We saw them today up in Clermont, big trees fallen after the Labor Day hurricane, and locusts with their branches torn off, some still white wood showing. Forms of dying. And I don't like dogs. Sometimes I don't like what I see.

7 January 2012

## TO/WORDS

The letters are the skin of words. What happens when you strip the skin off, flay the word? What does the word say then, the musculature of its veiled meaning now laid bare? And deep down in all that meat, that history they so glibly, gladly, gorgeously stud dictionaries with, 'etymologies,' deep down are bones, black and white, *feherfekete*, hard old movies that are the real action of the word. Every word is action.

7.I.12

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So this is the business of morning for me I just discovered how to say. Mallarmé never says so, may not have known so, but leads us to this 'new frontier' in QBL where notariqon meets analytic theory:

to take *every single word as itself a letter* in an as yet unmeasured alphabet,

one we must learn to wield, to write the real texts we come into this Condition to exhibit.

The next stage of our work, or of the specific instruction to Write Everything. We're still learning our letters.

8.I.12

= = = = =

But even after all this time

I still want to wait for it:

a) the orchestra

of your lower body to

begin

i. playing

ii. rehearsing

iii. packing up their horns and timpani

iv. traveling aboard steamship to America

b) your public declamation of *The Thirteen Vowels of Spoken English and How They Fit the Twelve-tone Scale*

i. while I try to keep my tongue in your mouth

ii. while I lie at your feet trying to remember.

In case I haven't been all that clear, this is a love song.

8 January 2012

## READING

Some writing systems (Chinese as an extreme case) seem to have been developed to keep writing in the hands of an elite, brahminic caste. The hundreds of combination letters in Sanskrit, the bizarre spellings of Irish, likewise come to mind. The purpose seemed to be: *make it hard to read*.

Whatever the socio-economic motive, we know that ease of reading is a thorn in the flesh for oligarchs. Keep people oral. Keep them without history. A people who can't read don't have much history. Can be more easily manipulated.

At the same time, though, ease of reading is an enemy of poetry. It makes us glance at the poem rather than experience it in the time of sound. In speaking of this anxiety with Michael Ives, he said he demanded of a poem a "thick experience." That's what we want. And we have sacrificed most of our audience to get it with our poems, those intricate dances for readers we propose.

8/9 January 2012

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Slow walkers on a common field  
people of different sizes casting the same shadows  
I don't want to believe anything anymore  
I want to know

                  this language so rich  
with vowels we can barely sing.

8 January 2012



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The dream would have given  
an older woman  
mother of my young friend.  
How hard her hip beside me  
startled. And why  
did she rest her head on my shoulder?  
I said: This is Nicole's mother  
but it wasn't. She was exhibiting  
a wall full of photos, a word  
coming from the Greek word for 'light.'  
It did not feel good to be with her.  
Why aren't I sitting next to her daughter?  
(In every way a most impertinent desire.)

8 January 2012

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Or did I want to be my own son?

Think of all I could tell me!

lumière à l'instant  
 où les sphères basculent  
 vers un autre cycle  
 toujours le même  
 sans être le même  
 immédiate lumière  
 comme celle qui a  
 ce jour empli mes yeux  
 du matin au soir  
 au fil des douze coups  
 qui sonnent minuit  
 pour voir l'an fondre  
 et s'enchaîner dans l'an  
 face à l'océan ouvert  
 sur l'infini où s'étend  
 l'autre continent  
 sur terre dans l'interstellaire  
 à l'écoute de l'heure qui vient  
 a  
 me:

the light at present  
 when the spheres are shifting  
 into another cycle  
 still the same  
 without being the same  
 immediate light  
 like the light today  
 that filled my eyes  
 from morning till night  
 during the twelve strokes  
 sounding midnight  
 to see the year dissolve  
 and be linked to the year  
 facing that ocean open  
 onto infinity where lies  
 the other continent  
 on earth in deep space  
 tuned in to the approaching hour

*au fil des*

the light right now  
 . . . . swaying  
 always the same  
 uninterrupted light  
 ??? till the twelve strokes  
 that sounded midnight  
 and link itself to the year  
 . . . . stretches out  
 that other continent  
 onto an earth deep in the stars  
 listening to the coming hour

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= = = = =

They are taking their time  
they are children  
they take their time  
they are time

and time moves the way they do  
effortless grace never stopping  
except for the Moment  
we know too, we say

*time stopped* but don't  
know what we mean  
the children know  
cold wind brings them

snow to play with  
time and children worship  
difference that is why  
they keep going on and on.

9 January 2012

= = = = =

But it wasn't to say this I woke  
it was to be a tree why not  
a minute or two to feel what it  
must strive eighty years to be  
against all winds and terramotions  
a thing of gathering and giving  
with a hundred thousand hands.

9 January 2012

