

1-2011

## janD2011

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First the sky loses color  
then the earth does

then we turn on something  
that we call light

a bluish or yellowish permission  
to see across the room

someone who's not looking at you.  
And maybe never will.

14 January 2011

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The notes come so quickly—  
too many, I want to digest  
the spaces between them,

I've got rhythm of my own  
I need music for its absences  
the lush vitality of its 'rests,'

the betweenness of its compromises,  
it sounds, it silences,  
it sounds again. Leave me

in that betweenland  
that I love, amateur of overtones,  
pilgrim follow note into none.

14 January 2011

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mind empty of local event

a far hum

always happening

quiet stupid snow

has its own reasons

15 January 2011

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Well-postured the big  
icicle is still there  
not much bigger  
after last night's deep cold.

I want to know  
where we are weary  
to begin again. And then  
my next song, a snake  
in a saxophone, a postcard  
from the government, a boy  
staring at the wall. This  
is the most dangerous of all.

So the sky turns out

(what we see of it, *our* sky

turns out to be pure upholstery

over a hard cold fact—

the Abrahamic religions  
grovel gladly in its dust  
because someone told them—  
something, who knows what,  
a voice on a mountain, a voice  
calling into the door of the tomb

a voice from an angel's wing  
to listen and recite. Why not?  
They heard and took to hear  
what they heard the voice to say.

*A voice belongs to the one who hears it*

so what we have heard  
becomes also mind,  
thus have I heard

*I go to church in what I hear.*

Mostly we listen to the silence,  
the voice can't bring us all the way  
but would lead you to the brink  
of silence, as Dance once took me  
to where the rose knows silently itself.

15 January 2011

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No quiet for the mind to pray.  
Public worship in the blue hour  
stanchions rolled out  
to channel foot traffic  
the prisoners of imagery  
assemble in anxious joy  
they need to be near  
they need to touch  
the image that led them here  
the shadow of it  
on all their minds.  
Pilgrimage. Throng.  
θιασος. The god too  
comes with retinue—  
whole earth choked with religion.

15 January 2011

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At first people must have found  
the Eiffel Tower hideous—  
iron scrap where should be stone  
spires heavenward heaved but here  
the coatless skeleton of something  
mechanical, commercial, very big.  
It dwarfed the sky.

How long did it take before  
Parisians saw it with affection,  
first class tourist attraction,  
sign of the city? Or till  
they smile and don't see it at all  
except maybe when a glass door  
swings open or shut now and then  
in Jacques Tati's last film  
and glows a glimpse of it  
reflected far away?

15 January 2011



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Walk there in deep snow?  
Prints of a man. But even his words.  
We are punctuations only  
in the long, long speech of Earth  
in some old master's play.

15 January 2011

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In the crowded party  
women camped in the kitchen  
I hurry over miles of living room  
to find them there.  
And there they are,  
true as ever, leaning  
on counters, perched  
on stools, propped  
against the sink—  
the earth itself is not  
strong enough to hold  
even the slimmest woman  
just standing on her feet,  
the world needs her  
to rest her tiny weight  
on some manufactured  
thing. A human thing.

15 January 2011

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The ornament of earth is why.

Tracks in the snow lead  
to more snow. Something stopped here.  
Cæsura. Doorway to the sky.

They worked a sly miracle here,  
a five-millennium-plan design  
that leads to this moment now, this  
is the *telos* of all time  
if only we knew what this is

or how to hold it in our hands.  
Or it is our hands. Be ready always  
more or less sober and keep watch  
but what makes me think these hands are mine.

16 January 2011

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A piece of ordinary worry  
things about checkbooks and cars  
and why there are so many shadows  
and why the tree's shadow moves  
all day when the tree does not.  
Easy stuff, but scary if you think.  
And thinking is one more terror,  
frantic animal locked in your house.

16 January 2011

## DRÖMSPEL

The stone house has no walls  
its window look out over a plush, mowed lawn  
that no one ever mows.  
It is moonless midnight but we see.

We're inside it, three women, a learned ghost, and me.  
The house is big and brown  
brownstone is what the no-walls are made from  
and windows full of books  
that let the light in or maybe make the light themselves  
and give it to us  
so we can move around and see each other well  
we take turns being visible  
being young being old  
we pose against the light  
or pretend we have something to say.  
But we do have something,  
each of us has something,  
something that comes from the Himalayas  
the mountain itself  
where Shiva embraces Parvati and Cakrasamvara embraces Vajravarahi  
but none of us come from there  
just as none of us is really here  
am I? are you?

you led me in and sat me down  
on the windowsill where you know I like to throne it.  
We all take turns at being.  
How simple I want our words to be.  
Our little needs, skin,  
and being seen, and people love us.  
No moon. When we stand  
right in the middle of the stone floor  
and the room is very big  
big from the beginning  
we sometimes hear liturgies of other practices,  
those weird bundles of mistakes called 'faiths.'  
Now and then a cat trots across the floor.  
One woman sits firmly on her haunches  
and she is the middle of everything  
I think she's the reason we're here,  
one woman draws words neatly on the walls  
we walk along the walls to read  
and every word seems far apart from every other  
but they all link to say a darkling poem  
that takes place only in us, alive only in us,  
one woman is holy—sometimes she seems to be on the lawn  
sometimes to be part of the house  
we lean against her then  
or sometimes she floats in a dream  
of which we can see only the shadow  
and it smells like eaglewood.

The ghost hovers through space reciting  
passages I think from Longchenpa  
and I just watch the women  
watching women is the most instructive thing  
if I knew anything at all  
it would come from having watched women  
but in this house I haven't  
watched women long enough to know anything.  
The woman seated firmly on the ground  
says to no one in particular  
"This is a place of oblation"  
and my eyes (I seem to have eyes)  
fill with tears  
as I remember all the offerings I have made  
of myself and my things and my loves and my desires,  
and I even was an oblate once  
back when I knew what such words meant  
no wait, I do know what they mean,  
they mean me, utterly.  
They mean you.  
And so we live in this house and meditate  
until we are swept up by our thoughts  
or by the lucid place beyond all thinking  
shows round the edges of our thoughts  
those poor things those little broken stories  
and all the light beyond  
sweeps us up and offers us, oblations, to some passing god.

I think we take turns at being gods, too.  
That's not certain—how little I know!  
getting younger getting older  
touching and being touched  
how is it different and how is it the same,  
is anything the same?  
What else is there but a lot of names?  
if there were a name for what we do  
I imagine it would be easier  
the way rain is easy or lying on a bed is easy.  
after you've taken off your shoes and lain down.  
But in this house there is no eating,  
maybe we don't have bodies enough to eat with  
that's one more thing not certain.  
But the woman gets up and gives me a book  
it is the same one I brought back from France  
on a ship when I was eighteen years old  
and the book was the moral and philosophical  
writings of Descartes  
who died in Sweden of the cold  
on an icy rainy day just like now and here  
here and now on the other side of the dream  
thousands of days later or before  
and when I open the book  
she takes it from me and pours out from its pages  
an austere acerbic white wine,  
she gives me some but I don't drink,



that is my secret

a deranged sobriety

studying the skin of things

near and far.

The house though has no skin

its windows have no glass

and the woman sit and stand around

making the words turn flesh,

if this is flesh we are,

we are certainly there

but there like the walls of this houseless house

where there and not there mean the same,

but is anything the same,

shades of light or shadows of someone thinking,

you, out there, hungry with sleep, waking me now?

16 January 2011

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The simple of it  
a kite over the little hill  
between Lasalle St. and the river  
where they come on weekends  
from Chinatown to tourney  
paper dragons on the sky sward.  
I almost rented an apartment there,  
it would have changed  
my life entirely  
though I still miss the pretty kites—  
who would I be now  
and who would be my dragons?

17 January 2011

**STANZE. STUBEN. STOVES.**

The only muscle for art enlightens or tries us a word  
 we never heard is spoken that is why  
 apt over the horizon to embrace

the distance itself as the sky embraces earth  
 the questionable miracle of desire organic evidence  
 of a star is still alive the sentience

surpasses our meek boundaries girl  
 an event all over a thought  
 is wall enough to shape what happens

installation art is you has to be you  
 always at the center this cup  
 is just for you into it the light pours

the sound welcomes if only your heart  
 beat if only you hear Socrates is a midwife  
 therefore birth art art birth the answer

no question needed luminous word healed  
 of religion all the fish freed into the sea  
 art is liberation of the next half-mile

step by step building a jungle to hack our way through  
one time a sunflower grew from such seed  
now a cloud releases sleet anxiety a philosophy of

nature needs revelation else we're stuck  
with our senses Hermia leads us to sleep  
anteaters are designed to eat ants why must ants be eaten

is our whole being too shaped by appetites baser than geometry  
no thank god we are too awkward in our bodies  
to go wrong bless us with turning inside out

ribcage of fasting Shakyamuni the sky  
was a stone once began to think the food  
was so good it had no taste but lived us.

18 January 2011