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The soup pot the rust the old breadbox devices

soup rust rot breadbox

save for another day

the glamor of

an ordinary thing

devices

for mining the mind. Set out a week ago to cast off fat, its own fat,

to give it away, fat is the surface of things, fat rises, rust loves the surfaces of things but rust runs in,

a pot of soup

set out to cast a week to last and now it's frozen, what does it say, what does the fat say when it comes to the top of the liquid, forms its own meniscus slowly, stays there a frozen week, what, who's asking, who wakes it now, lifts the lid,

careful first

to sweep the bits of rust away off the top of the soup pot

held down all the frozen week, held by a nautical loop or hasp from the beach grass down near the ferry found, put on top of the soup pot top to keep marauding coons and foxes off, out— can they even smell lamb fat in the freeze?

take no chances,

squire, anything you name will also name some part of the mind and when I say mind I may mean brain, the results are still out, I mean they're not in yet, a part of the mind belonging to the imaged or imagined referent of that name, as fox, soup, rust, hasp

anything will do the trick

("awake, awake," as Louis almost said).

But what of the breadbox? Isn't there more than lucency in the old roll-top, more than gleam in the stainless door,

not so old really,

isn't there curl, and shape, and smoothness, rhythmos, melos, all the Greek things we like to mind.

the door slides open a quarter-circle,

not so old, really, just a crack in the bottom, wooden under all that sleek, crack, not good for bread or such since ants would come columbusing and colonize, no, not good for cookies, not bad for keeping

the odd bag of coffee beans

fresh in a frozen week outside, ants don't drink coffee, yet,

no ants

in winter or if there are, not here.

Where are all the lives that are not here.

The rust, though,

is glamorous and rough,

reminds a girl

of Bible passages when she was even younger, squirming with boredom in Sunday School. all flesh is grass, they warned her, grass that withers, goes into the fire,

flesh, but she knew better

she knew goddam well that all flesh is flesh,

and things are only worth their feel, hell hell, let her sit still, sit and gaze all day, all the rusty sunshine of a winter day,

all flesh is flesh,

no threat in it,

she could or you could,

anybody,

hold it, could dwell on this rusty nautical device with composure,

this big heavy haughty iron omega, some great Isis could come and loop it on her arm, rattle on her sistrum,

ça va?

Rust is best,

the color

of time itself,

some say,

or color

time likes to paint things with, improving our pale world,

finding out the blood of common things

or this is Russia where 'red' and 'beautiful' share some word in the ordinary way people talk,

I wouldn't know,

but so they tell me, those busy people who read books then actually go there, Bookland,

the physical (the word 'real' is often used) replica across the seas of what they read, all the described things, Red Square, cheekbones, insidious ballet—

the soup has to wait even longer, really the substrate or viscous heirloom of a former soup, now ready for its new antics.

a quantum of kale,

aliquantulum salis, a bouquet of mustard greens,

a lump

(bolus agni) of long-stewed mutton hoofbone to light the greens up with the brown aftermath of meat.

Red red red

red red sang the rust,

this rust is for Sherry lives over the dairy paints in a tower over and over the strange black flower

botanized by so many poets in our day, or a little bit before

she gathers rust because we must and in the loss our beauty won she spills in black and red and no blood shed

or yesterday,

ah, there's more to a day than opening the festive eye nipping to the bathroom then standing at the window and glomming at your neighbors jogging by, squire, it's the whole Kantian enterprise de novo and toute suite, imagine a a question that fits your answer and announce it in a noisy monograph and so to bed-

but wait,

the sun's still rising,

you have all this light to get through, all this sheer result,

and me an amoeba on your wash-stand watching the shimmer in your hair but how did you come in,

isn't this

all about the soup, coffee, breadbox,

soup pot, prowling foxes, nautical hardware standing on deck in a clever wind, books about Russia, some man who walked to the end of the cosmos, neighbors trotting past with nary a glance at me, being invisible, breadbox, shiny hair, rusting all over,

babbling somebody's name, walked all the way there whistling a tune by Aleksandr Glazunov whom my friend Martin studied with in Paris not long before any number of wars.

see, Time did it,

bright wandering one,

brought memory in and the names of famous composers to pin to the wall on oaktag, every class had its own Grade Composer, **Grade Saint, Grade Poet** mounted on the classroom wall just the names of them, the names, the names are sacred, never a note of their sense or music were we given, just the names, the names are sacred, the names are enough—

but wait,

who is this we sauntering feral but forgiving out of Blessed Sacrament Euclid Avenue? We live in the breadbox, we are memory moldy ever green, we are the ones who remember, anybody who remembers has been here too long,

the breadbox

that better, chaster, mind seems far away but not forgotten.

Roll up the top, a dry old American flag on a plastic stalk is in there too, one of those flags everybody gave everybody else right after 9/11

and sheepishly a few

days were patriot—

that very Tuesday

when our wonderful plumber came to finish the new downstairs bathroom and we discussed what seemed to be happening 130 miles south as a direct result of a plane that had flown over our house an hour ago that very flag.

what would we do

without plumbing,

to sweep those memories out to sea?

It's the old principle: pretty librarian,

learn to read,

begin anywhere,

every road goes home.

This could go on forever

so could the crows,

they have finished their morning offerings now and gone to croak their solemn

high mass in another tree,

not far,

my favorite bird—

but what of me?

Soon

it will be time to strip mustard leaves from their tough stalks and chop them coarse, get the new soup moving in the old soup pot, put the top on top,

time will never come back,

Lenin moulders in his inefficient sepulcher but I can't do anything about that, a little prayer maybe, now and then, for peace and stuff,

just make the soup,

squire,

someone is bound to eat it and be glad.

Or at least warmed and nourished and what else happens when you have been in the world so long,

eating and rusting and watching, Che Guevarra started by wanting to heal the lepers, intentions rust.

things turn red,

take on a hard core policy,

Emerson lingers indoors

reading the lovely book of his found mind,

me, I go

down to that little stream

with all the fish

down below Yosemite

and spend the night

dreamng the water

back to the rock

back to the sky

grieving for my lost years

or I go

out in the snow to fetch the paper in.

A KINGDOM UNDER SNOW

1.

A tenor tells a courtesan it's time for both of them to repent—but they have to repent in the flesh—

that's what music is, the opera explains, there is Reason in the slightest sound or touch which if followed all the way will lead to heaven—or such heaven as women and men cn bear to dwell.

2.

But the broken forest looms. Warlocks bereft of their witches crack stones in mortars try without fire to make a cement that will hold the mountain up and not let the sky come down,

a thick, interesting menstruum in which their herbs can mingle and make the birds sing again. They try to grind rock into spring, lick salt off the back of the wrist, squeeze their eyelids tight until the sun breaks free.

3.

The repentant courtesan is in the desert now, her technocratic lover close behind. They sing a song of water and water suddenly bursts out of the sand at their feet glad to hear itself summoned at last fter all these dispassionate theologies.

This would normally be the point in the opera where the soprano gives up the ghost and the tenor grieves at the top of his tessitura.

But someone is coming: it is the high priest, the bass, he sings a quiet pretty melody that points out there is not much music left in grief that sobbing hasn't sung already. Decline to die, he urges them.

The lovers stand up and embrace, the high priest sweeps the dead leaves up into a heap, then takes an armful up and drops them in a burning basin then vanishes in greenish smoke.

The lovers wonder where the trees are that left so many dead leaves around them. But this is opera, the place where fire does not burn and death is beautiful again.

The high priest's voice falls from the sky: Be one another. Be at peace.

Somewhere way down there, the conductor lays down his funny little stick.

e il mare suo

because any place has its own sea all round it,

ocean

of earth sang Apollinaire, oceans of air and wheat and rock—

and there in the middle of the sea the little island of anyhere

where you stand, always alone, watching the almost unmoving

around you. Does anything seem or seem to come towards you?

Anyone out there, anyone who is not an island?

vorrei e non vorrei

Joyce took care of that, I want and I don't want and I don't want to do the thing I want to, true to every moment every life I'd rather and rather not.

If a clarinet were an animal with four legs what would it see? Slim people slipping through saplings people not the least ashamed of themselves or being seen, leaves let them through, roots try to trip them up, it's a game among these slim people always moving the clarinet watches closely with its single darkness and its many eyes.

A.

Everybody always wants to be somewhere else.

B.

I haven't been anywhere long enough to notice.

28.I.13

Here comes the camera the heart without a head here comes the tripod that conquered Kanchenjunga here comes the finger that invented history here comes the glass that loves assassinations capitulations firestorms and naked people caught in their embarrassment here come the annals won't leave us in peace the dreary records of our poor excting ordinary lives here comes memory with its head on fire.

1.

So how many have come to watch so many watching. The anger is in the white paint, titanium, the peace is in the red, only red has the kind of voice you can hear over the waves. The self-pity that chisels an island out of a sea. Be. Be. We're always trying to be. Says who? The mannequin in the mind's window. Now spill the color of a woman on a woman.

2.

It was in another state another climate and the trees hid their names from me we played cards but it didn't matter, people die all the time, we thought, so what was so special about me that I could die and come to life again with dirty fingernails and hungry for you, whoever you are. Remember when we were someone else, and you pale with dark hair, recent escapee from the harem of a third-rate potentate. **3.**

Skip the remembering business, it's all just ideology anyhow, people trying to interrupt people trying to make love. We let ourselves fall in love with the color of a shadow, the tone-row of her laugh, more like a giggle and the birds outside add to the fascination—she feeds the birds and the house so dark when we come home as if no one ever lived here, but still we come in, sit down, sit there in the dark, who knows how many others are here too.

4.

Spill now the yellow forefront on the fender let the cadmium medium of which the literati are so fond define the forward motion as if the Volvo were going somewhere O Moon of us Swamp Children spread out your map and may it be to us as desire's autobahn breaking the barrier of civil coherence yes! let the animals howl their desperate vowel the one they all know the one we try to copy when we blab in our fat lips our skinny tongues what you call a word I call two silent hands.