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## ENERGUMEN 2

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## ENERGUMEN 2

The great time for me is early morning, right after I've awakened. I go downstairs, onto the deck or in the cool dining room (with many windows), and open my bound notebook, usually an ordinary marbled school notebook, and write with a pen, fountain pen or gel or felt tip -- something flexible. Green tea or strong black tea or yerba mate, and I'll stay at that for an hour or two. Later in the morning, after meditation and breakfast, if I have time I'll get to type on the computer, editing and revising poems from the past few days, or from this morning (if I've caught up). So those are the two phases of a poem, the (usually) handwritten first draft and the later (hours or a few days) revision into typed form. As a typed page the poem will sit in my notebook for a long time, reviewed from time to time, revised, remade. And that process can go on till the poem is published. (And even then I don't always stop working it over -- usually in very small ways.)

So most of the writing is early morning, then late morning. My afternoons and evenings are usually busy with teaching and meetings and so forth, but often I have time, late afternoon, to composed at the keyboard. I love those moments, they feel like jazz impromptus, solos, quick, almost furtive, since there's always somebody coming to the door or the phone.

And then late at night, last thing before bed, I open a special notebook and write whatever I can, with weary mind, exhausted, trying to excavate, get below the ground level of the usual. I call this 'scraping the bottom,' to get the last possible gestures of the words waiting in/for me.

\*

Someone asks me, but:

My desk would take forever to describe. It's a geology, active, thick with things that call out to me. Right now there's a whale tooth on it, a translation from the Sanskrit I did twenty five years ago I've been working on yesterday and today, a diagram of mysterious arrays at Rosslyn chapel in Scotland, a book of Hopi texts, a pot of glue, a bottle of skin cream (I have very dry skin), a fountain pen, a postcard from Kyoto.

+

I've read a lot of novels (Bard Fiction Prize submissions) lately, and far and away the most striking is Monique Truong's *The Book of Salt* -- Gertrude Stein's Vietnamese house boy speaks. Will Heinrich's *The King's Evil* is terrific too, a book of astonishing gravity and darkness.

+

Since I've been insisting on the transactional nature of guilt -- that it always is a taught thing, a thing cast on you by some other, a deliberate or unconscious manipulative strategy on the part of some (early in your life) other/others, I've been remembering so many guilt-tormented people (some of whom I have been), and what has always struck me is this:

far from allowing their guilt feelings to turn them into gentle, considerate people, most guilt-afflicted people strike their friends as rather selfish -- not just in the sense of self-involved (who is not??), but in the sense of being much less empathetic or compassionate than their spiritual level (in other areas) would lead us to expect.

What I'm saying is, that guilt-afflicted people are so tortured by the sense of guilt, inadequacy, unachievingness, that they somehow, over the years of adolescence usually, learn to arm themselves against any and all demands that come to them from the other. Guilt is enough for them to handle. So this guilt they have been given winds up like an iron maiden, spikes sticking in, but also closing the person from people outside.

This is one reason why guilt is (in that Tibetan sense of it) a 'sin' -- guilt is a vortex that draws the victim ever deeper in, and the deeper in, the further away from being able to respond to or care about, or even notice, the distress or needs of those around them.

With this analysis (to dignify my rant by that name) in mind, I think one can work against one's own sense of guilt, and move back to an open relationship (unjudged, unjudging, unprejudiced) with one's own self. And through that opening, that 'forgiving,' come to an open relationship with other people.

So that's how guilt and selfishness coactivate one another. Selfishness is apotropaic, protective, and made of armor. And that armor was put on to protect from the torment of an inflicted guilt.

+

The pelvis is an animal that needs a leash. Anna Sofie von Otter in Carmen, walking her body around, moving her hips with her hands. Sense of her willing, pulling, a pleasant enough but not very intelligent animal along. Ditto last night in that aria from La Gde Duchesse de Gerolstein, her arms in the final salute lifted in stages, steps, while her natural eyes -- no part of her body -- rolled playfully, tolerantly, ironically, self-amusedly.

The eyes are not part of the body but of the mind, at least when those two parents-of-us are separated or divorced, as they usually are. The mind is left with custody of the eyes.

\*

And the thought of you [Charles Sandy] actually tending and repairing the Wearevers and Eversharps (somehow I don't know the Majestics), as well as the grander specimens, is very moving to me -- as if behind the scenes you were operating on the language itself. I get fascinated by nameless or almost nameless pens -- like a screw-fill burgundy model I bought on Lake Constance that leaked worse than any pen I've ever seen, but wrote beautifully, or like a Chinese imitation Sheaffer Snorkel I bought for a few rupees in India twenty years ago -- those strange big "Minka" pens they used to sell by mail order -- I used to think they were Russian Mont Blanc imitations (sort of), till I learned that Minka is Bavarian affectionate name for Munich. Puzzles and demands, poems than can be written only with a certain pen, pens that overrule the breath. It fascinates me so.

\*

saying kaddish for the living

\*

The train of thought of the original poem. Original poet not otherwise known.

Of all the grace of translation, obedient alertness to this train of thought is the greatest. How the poem thinks what it says.

And this \_is\_ translatable, the syntactic/morphemic order is within reach, even when the ur-sounds of the ur-iginal can't -- of course -- be reprised.

\*

Anxiety as a positive thing, both an energy and a tool. To use: not just for self-analysis, but for turning towards the world of things and relationships. Anxiety is a harsh light, but very clear. It does not flatter what it illuminates.

When Anxiety is let loose among the words, it writes such grand things. It's hard to think of Celine or Camus or even Gide or Perec as other than Anxiety Given a Believer's Voice.

Let the Anxiety speak. It is the angel with whom you wrestle, and you defeat each other, but depend on each other. You rise wounded from the battle -- the wound is the work.

\*

Squirrels on the snow -- Confederate troops skirmishing for seed.

\*

My snow, on the analogy of my lawn.

\*

Analogy -- what a teenager might think the word means: talking about assholes. Science of ass.

\*

"memory is imagination troubled by timidity" -- Luis Manuel Ruiz, *Sólo una cosa no hay*, p.239

\*

[to Bethany Wright, 15 Feb 2004, after she'd been asked to take over Chelsea] but this is extraordinary, and wonderful. Do it, do it. Always say Yes -- das heisst das wichtigste Mandatum fuer alle Dichter. Please. You cant know how much this pleases me, that a person I like and respect as much as I do you should be, somehow, out of blue nowhere, be asked to complete a job that I began almost fifty years ago. Yes, I started, all my own idea, Chelsea Review (as it was then called) with George Economou in 1957, first issue next year; we joined with the late Ursule Molinaro and her husband Venable Herndon to make the four founding editors. George and I withdrew a few years later (after issue 5 or so) to devote ourselves to American poetry, rather than the (interesting enough -- Rao, Sarraute, etc) Euro fiction that U&V were more and more interested in. G & I began Trobar, which lasted into the early sixties after I came to Bard. Ursule and Venable took on a woman named Sonia Raiziss and her pal Alfredo di Palchi -- though all that is only hearsay, since George and I didnt see anything of Ursule for years afterwards. (Though I read with her in Woodstock, of all places, forty years later, hmmm) Soon the magazine was all Raiziss/di Palchi, and he can tell you its history. But it delights me immensely that you, especially you, woman of Bethany, should close that ring. Do it.

\*

More than one sort of love hides in the closet, do you know that? When you've gone past straight and gay and bi, there are more devious cases, frightened combinations that would indeed dare to say their name -- but they have no name. Envy the faggots who have a label at least, envy the domestic dykes who settle down in stance and smile out their clean windows. We other lovers, nameless, even the margins of the world exclude us, or margin us beyond.

\*

If someone asked: there must be a word, or a phrase, that encapsulates the way the present can be locked inside the past, or the way nostalgia covers up (in its beautification) the past, the way loss is beautified and fetishized, as in the case of ruins -- what would I answer? Europe?

\*

Of course I chose my life, and even now I do not think I feel shame at what I've chosen. I chose a life where I depend on my own efforts as much as I can. For whatever reasons, from whatever arcane promptings of insecurity shot through with childhood experiences of desperate hunger for independence, and just as desperate need for notice and support, I chose a life in which I would be self-supporting. I would work, and I would support myself. I would accordingly become the source of my own approval. I would be a productive system, a transformer of experience. I would give.

And over the course of forty-five years (since that's what it amounts to now) I have worked every day at one or another of my jobs, every day except those few days, I'd guess less than one a year, when I couldnt work for sickness of some sort. Supporting myself: what did that mean? It turned out to mean supporting wives and friends, supporting my own body of work,

supporting the careers and work of my students, my fellow artists, my friends, the commonwealth of contemporary workers in the arts, through endless promotion, reviewing, blurbs, recommendations, translating, revising their work, editing their texts, essays, networking. I have worked hard to advance the careers of so many people. Supported little magazines and dark little presses, supported a monastery and Dharma center dedicated to the enlightening work of about the only man I ever really trusted. I think (or I imagine) that I have been generous in these matters, and generous also in paying time and attention to people, being as present to them as time allows.

Because that is the grief of my life's method. The cost of this sense of working, of supporting myself and others, has been (given my opportunities and talents, such as they are) a regularity of income depending on a regularity of schedule. The weeks I so hate, the hated schematic or framework that society imposes on the passage of time, the beautiful *durée* of mind and body. But that is the price most people pay for their lives, for their "choice." And this schematic makes me live by the clock, much more than I like to admit. People sometimes ask me how I get so much writing done. Answer: I give myself two hours in the morning. That's what I need to live on. That's what sustains me while I'm sustaining work and to some degree sustaining others.

Anyhow, the way I work, the way I live, though I still live beleaguered by the sense of not doing enough, not writing enough, not helping enough, manages to get me through the night.

\*

Yet in saying all this stuff about independence and self-support and supporting others, there is something else that has to be said: deeply and truly I have been supported too, by what an earlier age would call grace or moderns might call nurture or compulsion, and that I would call the blessing of the Lama (in all that those words mean)-- manifested as a world full of interesting and stimulating people, attractive and provocative friends, loving friends, opportunities to write and speak, receptive and industrious students, health and physical strength to work a lot, a beautiful landscape to inhabit, a time of high energy in human culture, a time absent of local war, a time when there are more opportunities to communicate, more technologies of inscription and decipherment and transmission than at any time in history -- these are blessings and I think of them a lot, and gratefully. All my own efforts are dance steps too, I think, coopted by a world around me, moved to their tunes as much as to my own. And who can tell the difference, what is the real source of any 'music?'

\*

And of course, it haunts me always, just from the names themselves, Remus was the first born, since Romulus is a diminutive, the names must once have been Remus and Remulus -- not brothers at all, *verstehen Sie*, but father and son. An empire founded on parricide -- the deepest secret of Rome here decoded, by the names alone. Herewith have I solved the riddle.

\*

In Keith Waldrop's book, the man Jacob Delafon walks on one side of a tree, I think he tastes the shadow of the other side of it, to which a squirrel always goes to hide rather than escape -- hide in that "other side" where who knows what else may always be hiding? It made me think of my Doors prose piece, what if there were everywhere things like doors that opened, but we never recognize them?

\*

In the Holocaust, the Jews were always killed for aesthetic reasons, or aesthetic reasons were always the ones given for first their banishment, then their destruction. It was the way Jews looked, it was the way their physical type would corrupt the appearance of the Aryan ideal. It was the way they created disharmony and dissonance in what had been the serenity of music, ugly abstraction in degenerate art that compromised and brought into question the correct appearances of things. The Jews were ugly and fat and skinny and dirty and wore ridiculous costumes. They had big noses. This extraordinary reliance on Aesthetics -- both the naive aesthetics of the man in the street, and the exalted "Secret Germany" aesthetics of Wagner and the George Circle -- must be unparalleled in human history as a motive for hatred and genocide. It shows the height from which German culture had fallen, the vast superstructure of common ideas and idealistic values which so easily, it seems, was appropriated by the demon dynamic of the Nazis, who probably even believed their own propaganda. The mystery of Nazism deepens when you take away from them even the saving grace of hypocrisy and insincerity.

\*

All of aesthetics as an issue, as an aspiration, is hollowed out, made sinister, by that history.

\*

I'm listening to Strauss's gorgeous and underrated Intermezzo at the moment, slack social farce as the underpinning of some of his most rapturous music, the way on the way home from work on an ordinary boring road we might see the most glorious sunset of our life.

\*

I missed incest. Never knew it. It's taken me so long to understand how important it is to people, how it dictates husbands and wives. How naive I feel not recognizing its pressure so long. It seems as if I'm the only one who don't look for what I had. I look only for the never, the stranger. The stranger the better. The constellation I saw in the sky that must be constructed, star by star, all of them new.

\*

I must be in New York for a few days (I seldom am there, have no pied-a-terre there, so visiting my native city I must stay in a hotel, since staying with friends makes me feel even more like an exile, and there is much shame in that,

once I was walking through the neighborhood where I was born and someone asked me what country I came from -- and that was shame, and from it I know that shame is also distance between what one thinks and how one is thought,

which is maybe why celebrities and the pope are the most shameful of all?

\*

I hate proactive people. Anything that has to be done should be done at the last possible moment, reluctantly, badly.

\*

Yet incest. After my trip to Brooklyn, I understand that my love for Nora was incest, since she was the mothering I mostly knew. So who am I fooling when I write, as above, that I "don't look for what I had" and lost. Of course I do. Her slim grace still moves before me.

\*

Then it has to be forgiveness. There's nothing else left now on the fringes of war, or set of wars, or never ending conflict, no matter what they do. Only forgiveness will rescue the loom of mind from those resentments. How to forgive your enemies? Stop thinking about them. Thank them for keeping you aware, send them good wishes and put them out of mind. There is no other way.

Once an enemy is gotten into your mind and moves around in there, he has conquered you and laid waste. So get him out of mind. Keep him out there, where the world may help to heal him.

\*

(after reading David Levi Strauss on Duncan and on Golub)

The roots we can write as \*lir/\*liso, or the second vowel could be -a: seem to come forward as Latin lira, the furrow left by the plow, and also a Gothic word like lisn, footstep. So we have trace of the plow, trace of the foot: trace or track around the edges of the field, the border where the footsteps run, border of the page where we note down one by one the traces of our thought or of our will: the list we keep. And since delirium is to jump the track, lose the furrow, we can also sense that delirium can also mean to lose your list. As if in madness we could at last walk through language and leave no footprints, no trace of meaning fixed in the mind. The great achievement of Henry James in his last calm, ordered, carefully dictated syntactic ravings.

how far does \*li-s/r-a/o go?

\*



Listening to Melvin Chen playing, very deeply and truthfully, the slow movement of the second concerto, I felt eerily, reverently aware of this: that Chopin, unlike any other composer I can think of, is somehow a trul-pa, an emanation literally present in and as his music is being performed live. He is present in it, in its presenting itself to the ear in real time. Chopin somehow presides over the performance, good or bad alike. He is not there in the recordings, however great. He is there in the hiersein of his music, as it speaks.

\*

A beautiful reason to use astrology: it connects one with four thousand years of human observation, experience of human behavior, the subtle relations between desire and fulfilment, the subtle affinities that bring people together, four thousand years of interpreting, synthesizing, and above all symbolizing.

An ugly reason to use astrology: it works.

\*

Pin the tail on the donkey. We used to play this exciting game, the blindfolded one wandering around with the cardboard tail with a pin in it, looking for (feeling for) the cardboard donkey. All the others could see, control, arrange, connive. Guide the innocent blind hand to unlikely targets.

Now in fact we all play the game all the time, all of us in the dark, no need for blindfolds. We wander around trying to pin something onto someone. The quest. The holy quest. Knights of the Ass's Tail.

\*

ROTA might be the name of my exercises in/on/off Genesis, my Bible backwards project. The versions & per/versions of the sacred,

reclaiming the sacred from the religious at last.

Rescuing the God from his worshippers. Elohim guide me, Lasses, to your selves sometimes I think.

\*

Do old homosexuals fantasize about making love to their young selves, the self finally become other?

\*

On May 4 it is clear to me: there were two sins in Eden. The first was the sin of disobedience, when Eve and Adam contrived to eat the apple. But the second sin was worse than the first: the second sin was the sin of obedience, when Adam and Eve lost their courage and obeyed the voice that exiled them from Eden. The Goddess Peitho is the enemy of us all, Persuasion is the fiend. But Eve and Adam listened to what anybody said, snake or angel or that mysterious person or persons who (Genesis tells) Adam and Eve met walking in the garden in the cool of the evening.

They should have stayed. The land from which the rivers flowed would be our land now, fertile, crowded with pleasures.

When we are next in a garden of delight, let no one talk us out of it.

\*

I woke up having dreamt this phrase: "Donizetti spoke openly of our 'Syrian' nation."

Waking, I understood Syrian to mean Mediterranean, the whole great basin and all the cultures it tinges and inspires, all somehow had been begotten from those Syro-Judean wildernesses where the Goddess was worshipped and the olive and wine and wheat were the fuel of thinking and desire.

Donizetti, I suppose because of his bel canto, and perhaps of his hard life and madness, turning inner grief and frenzy into music.

But where does he speak openly of that? Where does he tell us we are all Jews? And such Jews!

\*

Waking from that dream, I remembered that Charlotte and I had, five years ago, slept on the Hill of Tara, laid down on the gentle slope of lush grass, right under the Stone of Destiny, and slept a long hour undisturbed, an August weekday. I never remembered the dreams that crowded my mind in that sleep, though from time to time I almost woke determined to recall them. I do know that rule was in them, triumph and quiet empery, a purple shadow on a cornfield, sea on horizon in the dream, though I could not see it waking.

\*

Robespierre, the Romantic poet who wrote in blood.

\*

Whenever I'm asked to speak on a topic, or contribute an essay on some subject, I have nothing. I write in weakness when I write about. I don't have an about, I think, I have only an on and on. Deeply I suppose I mistrust trajectories. I am anti-ballistic.

\*

The poet wants to say everything. It is a short journey to the mistake --fatal for all those around him if not himself -- to think he knows everything.

Because of the holistic nature of the poetic utterance, literally that anything can be said, and anything that is said can be supposed, for just long enough, to be true, the poet is the most sinister of creatures when given power over men and machines. Mao truly was a poet, and Hitler too, and Stalin.

To go further along this line would be to try to prove something. Poems don't prove, they probe. They don't alter, they alert.

\*

Every now and then I'll experience something like this: a spontaneously intact mental awareness suddenly comes to mind, as immediate as a sense perception, as vivid as a dream, as compelling as a daydream or fantasy, yet I am neither asleep nor 'composing' a scenario as I would in fantasizing or making up a story. It seems to be something radically different and very much its own: a third kind of mental adventure or self-telling or spelling, and the most interesting things about it seem to be these: the unbiddenness, unpreparedness, intactness, completeness and above all freshness of the imagery or imaged event. The event will seem revelatory -- I feel a gasp of surprise. The episode I witness literally 'leaps to mind.' And it will keep coming back for hours or days the way a vivid dream does, or something one actually sees. And when I say revelatory, I mean that it seems to involve persons, situations or actions I'm not familiar with. Yet there's nothing hallucinatory about them, they're clearly mental events. It's only in recollection that they begin to get confused with things I dreamed, or things that 'actually' happened. I wonder if any psychiatrist has discussed these autonomous sudden events, or given them a name.

\*

Coincidence: I had picked up a book at the Rhinebeck library I'd ordered online and had not yet opened. As we were walking out, Charlotte spotted and opened a big picture book on the New Book table by the door. Illustrations of old animals carved for merry-go-rounds. She showed me a dragon, green, standing on its curled tail. Suddenly I remembered, after more than sixty years, the (darker) green dragon I used to like to ride at Coney Island (at Feltman's, I think) and I told her how I always liked to ride the non-horse animals --zebra, bear, lion, even the chariot, but most of all the Dragon. As I told her this, I felt overwhelmed by a kind of nostalgic guilt, a guilt towards the object, that I have felt many times in my life towards things chosen or neglected. This time the guilt was strong, that I had forgotten my Dragon. I hadn't thought of my dragon in all these years, my dragon, my dragon! Half playful, half lacrymose, I

told Charlotte about this, and I said it by saying, sadly, Mon dragon, mon dragon! When we got to the car and the subject had changed, I flipped open the book I'd ordered (Schweid's "Consider the Eel") and the first word I saw was Mondragon -- name of an eeling town in the Basque country.

\*

[thinking about Ives]

A man proposing to write newstory - the meaningful array of information that presents itself when the data (which are always surmises, fleshy resonances, guesswork, amber necklaces, malachite staircases, shattered chandeliers) of history succumb to the words, succumb to that language from which they first arose.

\*

Once I was standing on the cliffs over the old town of Whitby, its red tile roofs strangely Mediterranean in the bleak North Sea light. Someone beside me, as if overhearing my thought, said, Look, this little town, you can go down there and in the narrow streets find little shops that sell jet, the shiny black stone still so much used in costume jewelry, look, this little town, the Romans knew it, they got their jet from here, Whitby jet, you find beads of Whitby jet all over their world, Roman world, the black shine.

\*

Kingless, a realm. Mobless, a demos. These are the delights of something that gives us newstory; a good shepherd is shuffled along by his sheep a little, true, but guides them surely, slowly, richly over green fields and saltmarsh meadows.

\*

Maybe not "newstory" but some tune that makes sense of old (h)istorein, the investigating. And what does a poet have to investigate except what comes to mind? Where 'comes to mind' usually means come to mouth. (Mind in mouth. Mouth silent, the hand breathes, spills mind onto paper or such. What a strange job.)

\*

I want to send you a word to read in the night, or that outlying colony of night that is called quiet, a small word when no one is there to bother you except me, here, this word, just to say something, the outreach of silence to silence, a lot of words packed into one text, and the whole text rests, almost unspoken in a word like this, or that, or the silence after the sentence ends.

\*

There are certain sorts of animals -- beavers, prairie dogs, men -- who need to transform their environments drastically (often irreversibly) in order to live their lives.

\*

Build NARRATIVE SPACES into the world: first into the ground, then aloft, in housely fashion.

Call these "Tell Spaces" and let this new art form take in visitors, who will enact in real space, real time, their own potentialities as experiencers of space. Architecture as invitation to fable -- architecture as the analyst who by silence summons us to speak, decide, be master of our own story.

\*

I ask everything for a date.

\*

Is the child that's born the same child who grows up?

Not just the Jesus child (in Steiner's reading of the doubled genealogy and its consequences) --- doesn't every child become other?

Every child a changeling.

Life is a sequence (a set?) of one-way reactions.

Gates.

Everybody knows that. But at what point, what gate, does the born self become a different one?

I drag myself through these questions because I am haunted by the feeling, in recent years more and more, that at a certain point I stopped being the person I was and became another. Something just after puberty? The strange gap between the drop-out of high school and the precocious college entrance? Those are the markers that come to mind. Not the causes. Not the gates.

Does everyone lose himself then, and find another?

\*

Fatal excitation of public speech.

That was the silence Rilke and Celan [everyone thinks they're opposites, they are the same voice, one dreaming, one awake] and Char seemed to cherish. The silence that healed them. Healed them enough to go on, making sure nothing was easy.

The poet is someone with nothing to say.

\*

Eleven on ten. Seventeen on sixteen. These are the sacred measures of poetry.

Homer's typical line speaks seventeen syllables, just like the haiku. Each line a haiku -- in fact the way Japanese speak their haikus out loud, in one sentence, 'one line' breath.

Sanskrit line is sixteen syllables.

Catullus' line eleven.

Dante's eleven.

The basic line then of narrative: build seventeen on sixteen.

The basic line of lyric: Build eleven on ten.

The irregular, the extra-syllable of the fallen world. Lilith in Eden.

The syllable of grace. The odd number, the god entering into history.

\*

I like those strophes best -- eleven lines, seventeen lines. The one feels ancient and orderly and right. The other feels archaic, shamanic, alchemic, transgressive.

\*

Looking at the woods behind our house -- how close the woods come, how they half-encircle and shield us. I notice them more than ever before, and thank them.

All the poems, have I brought them from the woods?

Is my praise and love enough recompense for them?

\*

And I fear that someone someday will cut them down, as is the way with woods in America. I fear that, yet even if that happens, the woods will have been. The woods would have been around us, and (for all that time) we will have been theirs.

\*

Rough woods, so many bushes and trees, entitled to so many specific names I don't know. Yet for all their particulars, they are a single gathered person at our door.

\*

the notions of language and silence, cloisters and porticos, the place where I was so overtaken by the reflections I tried to summarize --- the mediaeval Chartreuse de Melan, near Taninges. What's left of it has been converted to a museum space for contemporary art, and we visited an impressive exhibition. I sat in the cloister, slipped off my shoes and let the cold stone relax me - I'd been walking a lot on the one hot day we had. The feel of the stone, and what it told me, literally told me through my skin, the sureness and clarity of that language, when I wanted to go up to the big paintings of orphan children's faces on the walls and tell the curators that Leon Golub had just died that morning, the painter whose work clearly stood behind the young painter's work on display, and of course none of this could be said, in words, the continuities, influences, temperatures, leanings of one on another forever, the love, the leavings, the sheer presence, dasein, that the stone said.

\*

All human institutions, including this one, have one and only one purpose: to protect the rich from the poor. All religious institutions exist to justify injustice. There is only one cure for the ills of society and even the physical anguish of mankind: elimination of the disparity of wealth. Since the rich will not give (except for the ornamental guiltanthrophy that builds opera houses and college gymnasiums). the poor must take. Since they have no means of production or control, they must seize them. If murder were allowed, then the the poor must kill the rich, starting not from the closest but from the richest. The life of the rich must be made intolerable with fear and hatred. They should have not a moment's peace, and every hand and heart should be turned against them. Despise celebrities. Refuse to work for them. The only power the poor have is refusing to work for the rich, refusing to help them in any way.

\*

(Thinking on the street in Saint Jean d'Aulps:) What does it mean that we are not bodies but people, people who say we have bodies? Who and what are we that we have bodies?

\*

my endless yen takes me to the back of the word cave always, taking (in that huge poem Opening the seals, some of it here and there already) the protofact of language as the rock invaded.

\*

language is the rock we can invade. In fact must invade. We have to live fully inside the caverns of language before we can go out into the bright world.

\*

Maybe Lear is the only great play, in the sense that Oediopus or Oedipus at Colonus are great plays. A mad incoherence of morality, an immense risk taken -- as it seems -- in the most casual way. Lear doubts the self-evident and Oediopus never even questions the bizarre. It occurred to me to think that Lear himself might share with Hamlet and Leontes a suicidal madness, a lust for self-destruction we can read in Iago too -- but how many victims will each suicide take down with him? Lear doesnt so much give up his kingdom as try to destroy it, make it a realm suicided by its king. If we look for the villain in Lear, we find Lear -- for his massive and mysterious cosmological crime empowers and makes possible the petty villainies of the daughters and courtiers (they might almost rhyme).

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In the coffee grounds at the Diaspora, I saw the image of a devil's face turn into Lear's face, and that made me think.

\*

And if there really were a "kill the landlords" movement... When the revolution finally comes to America it will be bloodier than any other. The despised and humiliated poor --ever growing in numbers -- will smite those they not only have been forced to envy but also, crushingly, to admire.

They will begin by smiting the richest. Working down Fortune's list, from the top, until no rich person will feel safe anywhere. Every poor man's hand will be turned against him, and almost every man is poor. And the rich will come to see what it's like to live in the Two Kingdoms, the divided world.

And this time the poor will not make the usual mistake, will not set upon and kill the richest poor man in the neighborhood, the butcher or the baker. Their loss will mean nothing but local inconvenience, local grief, overdetermined tragedy. This time go for the masters. This time the poor will recognize that the hugely wealthy are their single enemy, and will strike.

\*

All of the educational establishment is meant to inculcate only one persuasion: that the poor never get around to thinking of the simplest, cleanest solution to social ills: \_kill the rich.\_

Democracy is a system of persuading the poor they already have the power (that common sense should tell them they clearly lack). But their only power is to choose between two or few alternatives that the rich provide for their amusement.

\*

Until wealth itself is a crime, there will be no justice.

\*



Don't let them enjoy their profits. Don't let them enjoy what they've cheated and cozened and killed to acquire. Start with the very rich and work down. Not with the politicians, particularly, who are just the valets and chambermaids of the rich.

\*

My blundering attempt to keep mice from nesting in their pilfered cotton wadding leaves two recently born mice, almost grown, tumbling on the floor of the summerhouse. I try to work them back into that wadding, and the wadding into a little metal plate. I think they will die, and that it's my fault. I leave the plate alone for days, and see no evidence one way or the other. Sometimes it is better not to look. Then weather has its own way with the world, and eases my blame a little.

\*

All the great stories are quests. And all the great quests are failures.

Epic always ends in the funeral of Hektor.

What did they get, those soldiers Xenophon chronicles, when they saw the sea?

When Odysseus gets home, he finds a crowd of yobbos in control --

so is control itself the goal?

The hero travels through the world to find the one place or woman or kingdom he can control.

To find the place where I can control myself.

\*

The ability to choose to go no further... or to decide that the imag[in]ed goal is not worth the striving, what then?

But who would dare to think about the goal?

The goal for any man is determined once and for all. He either pursues it or does not. The goal is the goal, and there is no second.

Does a sparrow think about seed, an eagle about the rabbit? No, never. Only the trajectory matters to them, the arc to the goal.

\*

Write a book (maybe that Bible Backwards of mine) where every sentence begins But.

But is the most honest word we have, an innocent among deceivers, a hope for something new, a chance to break the habits of thinking by the habit of thinking.

\*

Language is space acting on time.

\*

Coming last week from the Zukofsky centennial conference, I thought: the usual conference is circumference.

\*

Respectable specters moved around the big room (Graduate Lounge, Philosophy Hall -- where I idled hard for three years). A pleasure to see young poets and students also there, interested in anything a hundred years old, smiling, cleanly dressed, with name tags.

\*

Babies now are born ready to bomb Baghdad. How long ago people stopped thinking. Is it the invasion of the images? We don't need Luddism. We need Iconoclasm.

\*

Strange vowels of one's native language, where one is two. [I wrote this a week ago, and I think I meant "I" is a diphthong...]

\*

Porcelain is from the Italian porcellino, little pig, itself a diminutive of Latin porcus, pig. This is cognate with the German Ferkel, piglet. It seems that a popular tourist souvenir for people visiting Florence in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance was a little ceramic image of the wild boar which is the totem and emblem of the city. This image was made from white clay of the region, and was pure translucent white when fired. The bronze statue of the boar in the piazza was called Porcellino affectionately, and its name soon transferred to the piece of tourist tchotchkes. Then in turn it transferred to the material of which the little pig was made. Who runs these transfers?

\*

Listening to the images as they sly their way into the mind -- repetition, rhythm, the shock of the familiar. And once they are there, who will dispel them? The man with seven devils in him is a man in whom the images take charge.

\*

Remembering how the Roman also empire spent and finally quenched itself in Iraq and all its adjacencies, fighting always enemies who had nothing to lose, fighting out of sheer paranoia about terrorist attacks on their Israel and its neighbors, one wonders how some people never learn.

In W's case he never heard about all that, I assume, but somebody down there in the Oval Hell must have read a book. Or maybe that very scenario, that seems mad blundering, is actually intended, actually policy. A mad Bush thinks he is presiding over the End of Time and getting us ready for the Second Coming, while the smart Iago Rove thinks he's just calmly, methodically, destroying the republic - a thing no oligarchs ancient or modern have ever much liked to begin with. Republics are swallowed by empire. Then Empire is swallowed by the desert.

\*

The stricter the monastery the happier the monks. --Lama Norlha

\*

a passage from the Odyssey, breath of a world where fable, story, explanation, cunning, mindfulness and skill win out, and violence is not praised and not foregrounded. It is the text I pose against the warful Iliad, whose vast overvaluation (in modern times) coincides with, stems from, supports the militaristic, imperialistic philosophies of Germany and England in the 18th and 19 Century. We teach the young that heroes are noble and worthy of emulation, we teach martial arts as precepts of moral presence. What fresh air it is to hear the Odyssey chant the alertness of men and not their savagery.

\*

Kafka. I keep coming back to that story Canetti tells of the reciter of tales who was given a book by Kafka after reciting one of the stories in it (the mines at Falun story, later so gloriously remade by E.T.A.Hoffmann, and by Hoffmannsthal as a play) --and being told by Kafka this is the best story in the world. That book, *Das Schatzkaestlein* or little treasure chest by Hebel firmly recruits Kafka to the deep tradition (and kabbalah) of the parable --the secular parable in which the intensity of understanding is challenged, energized, demanded -- but never given the consolation of a (mere) religious interpretation. So it is a riddle without a solution, a pure intensity of mysterium. The secular is what fascinates me in Kafka -- how he uses the shimmer and shadow of the transcendental to enact a purely -- and richly-- secular (and by secular I mean psychological ) cosmos.

\*

Girls with dead fathers win by abandonment.

\*

I want to write a poem by laying out a map of Brooklyn over a text and following the words that appear to run along or under the streets -- such streets as I wd travel to get somewhere from one of the places where i lived as a child.

\*

In the dream I was looking out the upstairs window at the head of the stairs. I saw that men had come and had cut down big trees in the back yard, and were cutting down the last of them. I was glad that others had spontaneously undertaken this dangerous work. When the last tree -- the big linden -- went down, suddenly a huge volume of water was released from the earth. As it gushed away, the whole contour of the ground changed, some sank, some rose. As the water gushed away, this water long trapped in the earth by the power of the tree, the tree was like a great stopper, flowed fast, east past the garage, then the lawn lifted and another area, roughly rectangular, sank. Its walls were bedrock and it filled in with water, a spontaneous pool. The lawn was green and smooth and healthy, the pool clear and fresh. I could still hear the roar of the liberated water rushing east as I woke.

\*

fulfilment of parental identities is the child's meta-identity, as I am a teacher and an opera singer)

\*

The absolute necessity is to wield a confident silence -- as a profound statement of who you are, what you've done, what you mean. It is a of course challenge to those you meet, but also a gift, giving them the space to know you at their own rate, in accordance with their own needs.

You must silence about your practice, when meeting people. Something learned from tantra -- never talk about your practice. Something learned from Dharma: never offer information when it hasnt been requested. The point is:

enter a new situation, a meeting with new people, as if they already knew you. Take as a working basis that they already know who you are. You do not have to tell them anything.

Your presence is reason enough.

Your presence is justification enough.

All a person really has to do is to be present.

\*

German sense of time so much different from American. We live in a vast country with a single language, edged here and there by another language of a (more or less) subject population. We are all about space, and time for us exists only as an index of getting from one place to another, a kind of unfortunate footnote of space. Germany is a small, compact and densely crowded country. It doesn't take long to get anywhere, a few hours takes you from the Polish border to the Swiss. Inside Germany, the population can savor time for its own sake; when you can drive 120 mph on the Autobahn, time is on your side. What I've noticed is that much more than we, Germans let time be shaped by their own personal, psychological, familial necessities. Shops close early and often. A German thinks nothing of "making you wait" (actually he is doing nothing of the sort, just sharing the passage of time with you, since by his lights you have as much of it as he has) while he has a cold, a family reunion, a quarrel with his girl friend, his child's birthday, or just a six day ski jaunt to Garmisch because he's felt seedy and needs to get away. At any rate, this is how I explain it to myself when genial, loving and otherwise quite responsible collaborators, publishers, translators, correspondents, agents are (by my lights) unaccountably tardy or sluggish. Briefly, our sense of responsibility includes time; theirs does not. I think it has to do with all of them going through the same school calendars all their childhood, having their vacations at the same time, sharing (pretty much) the same religion (not that they practice it, just that it's the coating on their calendar, same language, same politics (as long ago they were taught to seem to have). For what it's worth, this is my sense of why we have to wait disconcertingly for our well-meaning German friends to answer the mail or send the check or whatever.

\*

Towards liberty. The two great 'libertarian' innovations in discourse of the nineteenth century: the prose poem and free verse. Each had its clearest foundations in antinomian (Baudelaire, Novalis) or anarcho-democratic (Blake, Whitman) writers. Freedom as the technical telos of literature -- has that been studied in itself? Is it that which lies beneath the authoritarian-antinomian (Surrealism, Oulipo) as well as in the purer anarcho-hedonist (Fourier, Proudhon, Debord, Vaneigem) traditions? Experimentalism (however fascistic Pound and Lewis might have been, or [politically stodgy Stein) is implicitly libertarian. The letter giveth life.

\*

SYMBOLIC TRANSFER OF AFFECT

(more precisely, Transfer of affect by means of symbols)

This seems to be the base of a huge sector of American economy. The symbolic transfer of affect seems to be the especial province of:

1. Religion
2. Education (especially K-12 and liberal arts colleges)
3. Entertainment
4. Psychology in practice (counselling, etc.)

Determine how many entrepreneurs and employees are currently working in this field. What percentage of the work force does this represent?

Discover the STA product of each national economy.

Evidently the distinction I'm making depends on a dualism:  
transfer of affect  
vs.  
transfer of material objects or real property.

Note that this distinction is asserted as useful only for comparative purposes (as measuring one city against another, or one nation state against another.)

Ultimately we will find that transference of affect is radical to most (though not all) 'material' transactions as well.

Celebrity makes clear: the bigger the star, the larger the number of affect transfer transactions s/he carries out.

(Star: Symbolic Transfer of Affect Regulator)

Judaism is such an effectivem enduring, enthralling religion because (inter alia) it has developed such a vast network of affect-transfers in all domains of life, all seasons of the year, all parts of the day.

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