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CLASSICAL METHOD

Stringless guitar

a lot of space stuffed inside an open wound

a drum with a hole in it

such as might have been made

by a razor clamshell fallen from a great height

dropped mayhap by an angel's hand

if they have hands—

for angels are against music

except when they are the music

a violin as you can tell by looking at it

is some part of the human body

by mystery migrated to a dim elsewhere

where we are made of wood—

when pelvises live saintly lives

they are reborn as cellos

but only a libertine thinks that

and I'm not one of those so I don't think it

what *do* you think?

resemblance is poison

but like all poisons
can be opened into cures

anything that can hurt can heal

apply this Paracelsus principle to war—
armies

gunless infantry rescue flooded farmers

are you by any chance comparing
homoeopathic arsenic
with a fascist government?

all governments are fascist
that's what nobody wants you to know
red fascism brown fascism green
eco-nazi scandinavian modern pale wood fascism

you know nothing of these matters

I only know what the violin told me
before you cut its strings

I only know what Nina Stemme singing Isolde told me
before you clicked out of YouTube

and now I know even less than that
when it comes to ignorance
I can keep up with any man

if only women didn't like men
or think they need men
the world would be goddesses again

what do you know about it?

nothing, as I ceaselessly explain

I cannot account for what comes into my head

do I know where the wind is coming from?

isn't that just psychic fascism

to say whatever comes into your head

I never said I was anything but a cracked horn,

loud and wrong.

21 April 2010

= = = = =

Esparto grass

says me

an uncle

nuncio from Rome

is hell upon my toes

I stand up

wanting you

coal-black the look

in loneliness

respect is the only

measure measure

me by it and tell.

21 April 2010

120.

Whatever comes first the generic
leaps to the lay mind before the species

speedwell he said and my eyes watered
at such particularity

alone like a Spaniard in a world of things
nothing comes first

no more armies no more steel diplomacy
just a boy with yellow hair walking up the road

men fight because they can't be man enough
women fight to make men think they matter

he resigned the patriarchal office
and signed a love letter to a dead woman instead

that's safe he thought the dead answer mostly in our dreams
I do not sleep I only interview the dark

which of all my answers fit your single question
beloved lift the latch and let me out

I will roam through your wilderness
till the answer hunts me down

I too have lived three hundred years
in golden light beneath the hill.

22 April 2010

= = = = =

Have you ever been in that part of Switzerland
there is an apple overhead all day long
silent women are friendly without the slightest smile
but the graves in the little churchyards
such beautiful typography carved in
such chaste epigraphy!

When I look down
at the sun-flooded wood grain on the deacon bench
I think of Othmar Schoeck's opera *Venus*—
I love a country where they leave you alone
I am so cowardly all cheese and crackers
I spent my life apologizing to the cows.

22 April 2010

= = = = =

The plow the poor plain
broken by our interminable design

and the banana trees of Indiana
and the icebergs of Montana

all vanished in a puff of hope
for anger is the blood of government

quiet people need no kind of king.

22 April 2010

SKYDIVER

You are all you have.
And all you need.
The rag on your back
will open and sweep the air
slow around you
as you decide where
on earth you'll be.

Right now you fall
free, tumbling loose
or writing with your
arms and legs strange
Cyrillic on the sky.
Nobody needs to read it:
all that matters
is that it is written.

You need no one now,
you are perfect
alone with your glorious
fear, you are message
and messenger,
you come to earth
in your own way.

You are complete
because you believe
in the unchanging,
mother gravity, things
fall, deepest belief.
You are all you need,
you are your own
authority, you answer
only to the earth.

23 April 2010

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I've taught so many people how to write
that I've forgotten how to myself. Thank god.
Now I have to find a new way. All thumbs,
all timpani and Beethoven, Ghent altarpiece,
Sade's chateau in Provence. Pliny
the Elder describes me thus: "a bent fractal,
an obol stolen from a corpse's eye,
the natives take him for a sage because
he seems to understand the tongue of bees.
He is a magpie, a fancy thief." The Latin word
for thief also means the bluish sheen
on sheet tin at noontime, or a young eel.

23 April 2010

= = = = =

From where I sit the stars are shining
but when the cock crows another
animal lights up the sky. Hear,
o Israel, this Lord is our Lord,
the Lord is one. One because
the start of everything. The first game.

23 April 2010

= = = = =

The orderliness of the obvious
is a secret order
its signs are on your fingertips
when you touch one thing but not another

the world is your concave mirror
you see yourself there at the bottom of all things
Lucifer in his frozen hell is you
and you are the stamen of the celestial rose

Now you know the problem
you know you are also the solution.

24 April 2010

SIGNS OF RECOGNITION

Insignia of strange armies
proliferate on our clothes.
The Rear-Admiral of the Turkish Bath
greet the Commodore of Indecision.
We content ourselves with a handshake
prolonged, promising nothing, but wishing,
wishing. Some nights
you can see the Royal Navy cruisers
throbbing down the vein in your temple.
Look, my own wrists bear the three gold stripes
of the Field Marshall of Suicide (retired).
Did we get drafted or did we enlist?
Is there a West Point in dreamland
where we learned the trigonometry
of unreachable targets, the language
of salmon and seals, the altitude of mud?
My fine white tunic has medals on it
if I wear it everywhere someone some day
will tell me what they mean. What war.
Where I was. And who I am.

24 April 2010

= = = = =

If there were another thing
there would have been a first thing
first and that's in doubt.

There is a picture on the wall
I don't know what of.
It must be an image of itself.

I want things to be ready
when I wake or maybe not.
Maybe the tree could be somewhere else.

And the sky could be
on vacation at last.
What would I see if there were no sky?

24 April 2010

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A little notebook full of lies
the kind birds are always telling
and the summer always makes true.

24.IV.10

= = = = =

How can you believe anything I say?
Like a windmill listening to the river
I can hear the woman's body.

24.IV.10

121.

The Martinmas term begins but when
the ides of April are they far from May

there are book the mind won't let you read
so-called sparrows speak word of English

whereas the hawks are scientists in search
or the mother of the bride in sequins who?

the park bench in the rain! my father's horse!
we all are artists but the thing resists

so come to me voluptuous with nothing to tell
the name I give you lasts one afternoon

you called me crazy but I forget how to rhyme
I call myself a mirror nestled in your lap

polish is from *polis* words smooth as any city
this continent needs a scrub an oiling

what must a bird think of flags in the wind
why should it think anything and why do you too?

25 April 2010

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Window on a rainy day

the best of things

water in your hair

closest to god is a silent child

all things known

and everything yet to come

silent movie of a conversation

it's green as May already

how things stretch out in my hands

the yarn my mother made me hold

a hundred years ago

for what are numbers after all

but what we use to tell lies with?

25 April 2010