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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 sleep 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

= = = = =

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