

8-2010

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Sabbath quiet brings earth close  
God's busy with us all the other days  
today leaves us alone with what we've made.

25.IV.10.

= = = = =

Will I get home before the storm  
and are the children there I do not have

they tell me water is a paradox  
no reason for it not to be a solid

they say it only happens when lightning strikes  
maybe it only ever happened once

and all the water now inherits that  
forced godly marriage of H and O—

for water is our Eve the mother everywhere.

25 April 2010

# 122.

Look back on all the dogs you've lived  
the days the broken rock in someone's garden

because a hammer fell and the sea rose  
our frantic words are caught between silent things

language is our nervousness out loud  
serene without entanglement silent twilight

speaking only to kiss  
the woods are green already

nervous they wait by sewer manholes  
they know something's coming

*rus in urbe* the terror of the forest in town  
trots from shadow to shadow and finds you

I'll give you parks that make you think alive  
Eden in the XIX<sup>th</sup> butte built of rubbish

the very fallen trees are radical cement  
something comes of all this itchy restlessness

something like an opera or a man  
balancing on a log in a long river away

a slate falls from the steeple of Trinity  
a string quartet sits down to play.

26 April 2010

# 123.

Am I near enough to the ending to begin  
wafer-witted astrophysicists rely on guess

like every other *merchant of the real*  
fascist structures of new sciences

get married for the delicious shiver of divorce  
I won't tell what it means it means

what happens in your head when this  
happens to your ears or eyes high

bridge for random suicides down  
into a river of suspect redemption

o do not leap my darlings  
into the uninterpretable air

nothing sustains us like uncertainty  
this thing I call love

and sometimes try to share with you  
and sometimes hide among the relatively silent trees.

26 April 2010

# 124.

As often as I came there  
you were there before me

that's where there is  
the place where you always are

a place that binds me to approach  
I bring my tired answers to the question no one asked

as long as language this wooden road  
boardwalk by the sea alas never get wet

your eyes exactly level with horizon  
you are there and thus it is almost night

I am the small figure far away you see  
coming towards you over the salt-bleached wood.

27 April 2010

# 125.

So it all does come back to me  
pity like a pop song and no apocalypse

no lips of any kind these songs are mute  
the music fled you hear the echo of money only

the ribbon unwound from round her hair  
falls to my fingers after all I loop it loose

over a pile of mildewed books old postcards  
because every place you stand is church

home you carry in your body  
honey from before Noah's flood eternal amber.

27 April 2010

= = = = =

EVERY MOMENT comes closer and closer to the present, but never reaches now. There is no history or there is only history.

What would now be like if we could actually live in it? If I could eat my *potage d'aiglefin* and smile out the big windows at the lawn. If I could really be alone when I'm alone. Taste of the haddock in its warm southern broth — why does it feel like a miracle?

We are all walking around in our bodies. Sometimes you fall in love once too often and you can never climb back out. The mood turns into the mind.

27 April 2010, FDR

= = = = =

All those who waited for me know this:  
a Turkish cantor ululating gibberish  
into the windows of the zenana

he's almost blind, the lovely shapes  
loom and quiver in the darkness  
half his and half their own

women are like fish to him  
in an island he's one dry island in  
stung into speech by their quick forms

his eyes baffled by sunlight too  
he howls out his random metaphors until  
nothing happens but the fish still stay.

28 April 2010

= = = = =

SCIENTISTS tell us numbers are about themselves  
first and only then about us, as if the Grand Geometer  
or whoever he is had us as a kind of afterthought,  
some ants and mice to play inside platonic solids  
such fun for him to see. No. Numbers grow from us—  
we are “their parents and original.” I am myself  
the square root of three ...

THERE is a tent outside my window a pavilion maybe  
where ladies sit in shade and watch our tournament.  
That is me falling from the horse, me the horse is trampling,  
my own horse, I am struck down by a knight invisible,  
I need have no other enemies, I have me...

HOURS later the bird came down to feed. And where  
have you been, small winged one of the lower air?  
I have been beyond *metarsia*, I have been up there  
where nobody can breathe, I think I saw God’s throne  
and then I fell, almost lifeless, till the atmosphere below  
revived me. That’s a lot of work for one small bird  
I said...

28 April 2010

= = = = =

I have unscrewed  
Whitman's "flanges of words"  
I have pried off the hasp  
that held the lock that shut the door.  
Now the wind does  
whatever it wants  
and nothing means anything anymore  
but everything does.

28 April 2010

## VARIATIONS ON W.W.

The only trouble with them they have friends  
I'm tired of more than one at a time  
never one for choral music  
I will be a soloist among soloists  
how else could the trees grow tall  
and the rain divide itself in tones to come  
touching us each one gets wet by oneself  
language like democracy keeps pretending  
to be for everybody but it's just for me,  
whoever I am you're holding now in your hand.

29 April 2010

= = = = =

Are we named for what we will become  
a sword lifted to catch a sunbeam  
and never let fall? Still, the glint  
lights up the room. A name tells  
so much but who is ever listening?

29 April 2010

## TULIPS

how quick they topple  
over, heads down,  
shed pollen on the tablecloth  
how soon they fade.

But that's not how tulips  
are supposed to be thought about—  
they are vivid messengers  
from an impossible Orient  
where all the men wear crowns  
and women have no faces.

Why do they falter, limp  
in the vase, still lush  
red as the inside of your mouth,  
but falling over softly,  
why do they fall?

29 April 2010

# 126.

When you can't tell the beginning from the end  
when the empty chairs stand around you hear them talk

when they cut the ribbon stretched along the sky  
a boy you sent out for milk comes home with children of his own

there are no radios in this country  
we listen with our eyes now and it makes us blind

wait when the bridges over the Hudson sag at last  
the catenary moment comes to every kultur

there are high points and we droop between them  
when we touch the lowest point the Turks rush in

the moon we honor with our worship cracks  
the big bite in her means all we're not allowed to say

we are silenced not by censors but by our secrets themselves  
your unspoken vision is your whole magic power

if you tell it to the doctor it makes you weak  
who am I to tell you what to do

I am the other side of your mind

I am the listener without me you're incomplete

liberty is moonlight there must be something more

but already the way you walk you give yourself away

baffled by everything open all the hydrants

I need a different answer quick

a word we use to swim upstream

live in one depth breed in another

it's like wandering around your house watering the plants

no it isn't nothing ambiguous is ever green

I placed my right hand on the images and swore

I will decipher this skin I will inhabit this picture

he wanted to dedicate himself to writing new bibles

there are saints on the street saints every window

I was born in seven places married just in one

black hotel down the corridor the moon is waiting

we get what's coming to us then the light goes off

we ate a rose last night still here at morning.

30 April 2010

## THE SPOON

*from Sophie Reiff's prompt*

1.

Something is buried beneath this sand  
is it a dog or is it a man?

A small rock with a shallow shadow  
holds some sand down. You can't  
keep a man dead with such  
a small stone, not even a dog.

I'll use this spoon to dig it up.

2.

What will I find? Who is coming to me?  
If I dig deep enough the sea will come in,  
I'll open my mouth and shark will come out—  
they call him *dog of the sea* but me  
they call a man with a spoon. I'm  
the one who set the ocean free.

3.

Behold the man in black and white  
he may have a dog between his feet  
he fusses with in the old snapshot.  
The brick courses (English rows  
or Flemish bond?) of a whitewashed wall,  
hard to tell. Everything is old.  
But looking at it is always new.

30 April 2010

= = = = =

But in the valley of Aosta  
broken spokes collapse the wheel

we go no far  
in quest dark rock

one by one the population  
vanishes beneath the ground.

The earth is famished for us,  
ghost kings, ghost princesses of Savoy.

30 April 2010