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Some little perfect thing
an emerald lost in your crowded pocket—
the mist comes in and hides the sun
then lets her go. Bird song.
Hush of sea,
will the weather change before I wake?
Reach in and tell me.

17 June 2010

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

The quiet time, or try
to understand

nothing but the sea's
rough breathing at the door.

17.VI.10

= = = = =

Freemasons caught a cloud and
moored it in the temple
to the pillar on the white.

Greek babbling was heard
and French chansons
such as Hahn hummed to Proust
the little phrase je t'aime
and the mute e sang.

This they called Sophia,
the hem of her skirt
wet with their spittle,
men lick their way to Wisdom—
squeeze, darkness, release.

After they close the lodge
there's nothing outside
waiting for them but the high plain,
not desert but not much either,
a pronghorn leaping, thin air,
upland west of Lusk, Wyoming.

17 June 2010

[out of dream]

*I am the same kid I was before
the same cosmic immaturity
waiting for mother and father to come home
from the public mystery of day,
work, diligence, money, motive,
other people.*

I had no existence
but to want. And take in everything
I could. What was
this strange place I doubted from the start
it is so hard to be a part of?
*And then my classmate drowned at Gerritsen Beach
death confers an authenticity
a self-importance on the survivor—*
I'm still here so I must be real
and if I'm real this place must be real too.
But maybe John Kent left here and went to the real
leaving me here among the rocks.

18 June 2010

[Italicized passages are verbatim from dream.]

= = = = =

1.

Go back and be sleeping.

I told you nothing
of who I really am
because you know
better than I do,

you've never been
lost in the illusion
I spin for myself
the noble suitor
that lets me live—

you have the long breath of living in the world
but part of my body is stuck in magic land,
in old Kirk's secret commonwealth
to which my mind keeps hurrying back
at the least local obstacle to Will and Pleasure—

see, I can breathe too
on this headland of desire
pronged out over
a meaningless sea.

2.

In the mosaic of my whole work
sometimes a thousand tiles get used
to fill the blank sky or a puff of cloud
behind the Virgin's ravishing detail.
A thousand days. Texts. Just wait
until the whole stands complete, great
curved wall of it in every color, every
quality of high and low, displaying
the history of everything in right now.

3.

Chips, tiles, pieces.
Tesserae. Work
them together. Anybody's
body of work is that.
An artist does this—
the single Masterpiece
is a kind of lie.
Half truth at best.
Only the body of work
tells the whole truth.
Not all that hard
to write a poem. What's
hard is to write all of them.

18 June 2010

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

If your head's not in the clouds or in the dirt
not buried in a book or up somebody's skirt
just where in the world should your head be?
And when you answer please try to face me.

18 June 2010

CRAS

Everything should wait till tomorrow—
let torpid Saturnus catch up
and take care of our future yesterdays.
Morning clear but trees in tumult

tell me elm he said, I listened—
how early morning is and more!
How sky the sun seems to fill.
No wind left to eat. Everybody

out on their highest horse,
striving strumpets finagle their way
into familyest feasts. Who brought you?
I did, your inner nature, glad.

Communion breakfasts smell of bacon
lamb chops even for the children of God—
but why not stop eating altogether
and just go to the movies? All

you need is images and all-night sleep.

18 June 2010

THEATER

Theater will make you wise, compassionate,
horny, cynical, romantic, but never make you fat.

In a small theater you can smell the actors
and know what action really means.
You may forget the lines of the play
but you'll never forget the smell.

And you like this, in a queasy way—
it links you. A play is just words
but the theater is you—you are alive
in theater in a special way, no matter
if you're acting or audience—

you are part of the action and apart from it
hopelessly observing. Nothing can change.
You are criminal and judge at once.
Get used to it. This is exactly
what you always wanted: every man his own wife.

18 June 2010

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

That can't be a gorilla's face
looking in at me through the deck rail.
No. Two mourning doves and some sparrow
clustered together to make a dark with eyes.
The world is scary. I need new glasses.

18 June 2010

FEATURELESS SUNRISE

It's just getting paler
no contour to the light

to write

beyond language

and make sense,

all's well

ends well

in Muscovy

whence the soble or sable collar

you see to my neck

in that portrait of me by the Gander,

children,

when I was young and took to the sea

more than this sorry prelate you behold me now

stumbling among roses

who once in blessed Tartary

walked in the garden where roses were born.

To the shore!

where the sun is speaking

between the Bay and the Sound and the sea listens—

do you think in words?

I am the grandfather of them,

the lost pilot of them,

a schooner broken on the shoals.

And then there was this pretty girl
my heretic, or I was hers,
hard to reckon whose the first religion,
believing anything is so long ago,

the way you forget numbers, or I do,
when I look close at the petals of the rose
always lose count,

always start again.

Is that enough to tell you?

I was a merchant
and with such finery
I bought perceptions and sold moods,
trafficked with the night, sold words too dear
but some I saved for my old age,
when sunrise is a kiss and not a signal.

I own this island
I will leave to you
thick with hidden testaments and brackish springs.

19 June 2010

= = = = =

Easterish gentleness to the light
fleshing over Nashawena.
If it sounds good it is good—
this is music, remember.

The philosopher flees from experience
looking back at it over his shoulder,
the poet shoulders his way right through
to the other side then forgets where he's been.

Only the musician stays with what is
happening just now and only now forever
and nowhere else, and nothing to be
afraid of ever but turning away.

And the yogi lets himself feel everything
then looks kindly at the feeling till it goes away.
After music we get born. Then we claim
silence as our own. Dawn of a hot day.

19 June 2010
Cuttyhunk

BODY LANGUAGE

Not the way mine speaks to you
but to me. Sensations
in leg or side or nape of neck
that tell me what I'm so
dumb it takes me days to interpret—

it tells freely I hear poorly.
It is my first language and I'm bad at it.
That little knot of tension south of the calf
I have to transpose to the Tree of Life
to learn something's wrong with my dreamtime,
my pass of dreaming, my nightly gnosis—
so I must illuminate my dreams and be
voluble at waking,
 it's a sin
to keep a dream to yourself.

 When my leg
learns to relax then I can go
like any other to Argentina
and practice my German on old people
who are beginning to forget theirs.

Nothing to worry. Down there
there'll be a sky over my head too

and animals for breakfast

and find a nice girl who likes to hear me talk.

I'll take pictures of her face

when she's doing something needs concentration,

translating Greek or solving equations

and her mind in on that, just that,

and in her intensity she forgets her face

and so it's all for me,

her mask of intensity is

the actual face.

I'll put all my pictures of her

on my wall,

fetishes of abstracted identity.

And while she's sleeping I'll walk around the room

working on my Spanish verbs but still

listening to my leg at last,

and the curious siesta

between my ribs.

That is why we travel,

to bring the talking body to a new place

where you can hear it better. The snow-

capped peaks and date palm trees are just incidental.

20 June 2010

= = = = =

I'm the kind of idiot where walking around
is a kind of Morning Prayer.
Not a Mass—nothing gets changed
except into itself. The bread
becomes more bread. Miracle
of identity. The sea
has never been wetter than now.

20 June 2010

FIVE A.M.

Hour of the gull here.

They leave the sky
and patrol our lawns.

How little
a part of the sea we are
with our flimsy houses.

We should live longer,
long enough to tame
the mind and do no harm.

Then worry about gulls.

20 June 2010

= = = = =

Sea haze and tufted cloud.
Do what I can do be somebody else.
The person I want to be
is waiting for me in a corridor
towards the rear of the museum
somewhere in Germany or
possibly Poland. Massive
late Egyptian statues all around
and he knows all about them,
is a statue-wrangler or one
who knows the gods' names
or just a curator in fancy
eyeglass frames. Afternoon
but he still hasn't had lunch,
the long stone halls are empty,
he's waiting for me to
come and become him.
I will have to learn how to
tie his bowtie, otherwise
clear sailing—nobody
knows how Egyptian really
sounded anyhow. And the real
meaning of a word is how it sounds.
What it sounds. Maybe
he's waiting for me to make up

Ancient Egyptian, somebody has to,
hear it in my heart or loins
then answer all this alabaster.
Do I detect a Teutonic (or Slavic)
impatience in him? Why
am I waiting. I run my warm
hands down the cold flanks
of some late queen. I'm ready now—
I'll start babbling now, the sounds
will be the market place in Thebes.

20 June 2010