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HERE THE FUTURE HIDES

Sometimes I know what the picture says
before I look at it. *Time is fractal*,
don't you understand? The shape of
before I look is the same as the shape
of after, only bigger. So what I see
when I open the artist's portfolio
is already shaped in my mind and
making me fit to see it, since it,
already made, is already fit to be seen.

13 January 2009

The fractal nature of time is why it can be said that the future is clearly inscribed in the present, and your next life shaped, already anatomized, by this life now.

= = = = =

Narrative takes us away.

Poetry brings us back.

That is the glory. The problem.

*

Poets are called dreamers because they wake up and look around them and say what comes to mind.

13 January 2009

MIXOLYDIAN

manners,
what made me speak
was not the crows

but they sustain me,
or the god-bless trees
though they help me think

parsing the damned weather
had nothing to do with it,

it was the shape
only, of things,
the shape of a woman
and the bishop's house,
broad synagogue, spire, folly movie house,
the innumerate architecture of dream.

It was not lyric

it was the house on your back
I craved accurate knowledge of
by skin and by reach of sight,
closed mindset on that
to make it mine
and let the song come through me
if it could find its way.

14 January 2009

= = = = =

Greed is the animal your fancy
love rides down the white streets
when love is leaving.

14. I. 09

= = = = =

One more confession!

Sins grow by telling.

14. I. 09

= = = = =

Sunlight on
gold nib
fountain pen
smell of
coffee nothing
missing but this.

14. I. 09

= = = = =

Maybe this was enough,

a word, alone.

A root simplicity

like a god coming down in a cloud

for you,

something everybody understands.

Philosophy seems a trick for

doubting the senses when a wise man knows

by instinct the senses

are not to be trusted but to be worshipped

this bring anything in front of me a piece of God.

14 January 2009

ETUDE

Oft sun the want to be
braves weather. Everything
is a trick. Hear this.
To hear is the same as you.

We don't have to come further
than together, That alone
signs the pact. Savages
in the woods around us—

through their elegant languages
you can hear the root
barbarbar of their souls
greeding things.

Recede into us, I into you,
case closed, door
trembles in the wind.
A wolf would be welcome.

All these books just a mute
excuse to lay my hands on you.
The key has to change now
now the end is nigh.

15 January 2009

PRAYER

Old names for new sins.

Submitting to the obvious.

Blaming the soul.

Leaving a book on the ground

so that the Most High and the Most Low coincide.

Prayerful we live.

What is poetry but a saying of prayers?

A poet is elocutionist of insane caverns

making sense of hollowness, reverb,

beast roars, bare-limbed semaphores.

* * *

Prayers would be better literature if we didn't so casually assume that God or the god knows what we mean no matter what we say. We keep saying to divinity You get the general idea. But in poetry there is only what the words say. Only the words mean. And the gods themselves sometimes deign to listen and learn from what poems say, some familiar thing they never knew before, a new sliver of their own infinity.

15 January 2009

= = = = =

How foolish we are to think that they're just singing—
every sound's a word or lightning sentence
now for to listen to like a river to its alewives or
raft or God on her throne above us tunes in times
on our raptures so we must be continuous.
Attend. En-ear. And subtly take aboard the mind
that music has, morsels reach us through her grace
greeting morningly to master our silences—
strange intercept, mutest creatures, men.

16 January 2009

= = = = =

My first book
was blank. A red
octavo maybe
two hundred
pages hundred leaves.

I had been notebooks, schoolbooks, nasty little brown flexible spiral-bound assignment books that fitted in hip pocket and took on the shape of the adjacent buttock and sweat made the ink run, for there was ink in those days.

But this!
An actual book, a real book
complete with only the words missing,

the missing words I can spend a life fulfilling!
I never thought I could fill it
but my heart suddenly bounded with aspiration
to fill this book, every page, to the very end!

That's how it began,
I was maybe ten
and my father brought it home
from work, clearing out the office,
and here it was, an Everest in my hands,
my work, my task relentless

to and by myself assigned
but who knows who was listening
took me at my unspoken word
and gave me words to fill it.
Everything is a gift.

16 January 2009

= = = = =

But it might have been here
a tumult of reason
stroking the flowers of the heart
like a pretty woman in a crowd of soldiers
all about the magic of two
surfaces pressed together,
public word and your private meaning.

If they become one, the same,
then magic would be lost—
only by afar can
meaningful friction come,
action at a distance,
let a word never be just itself in a book.

It waits for you to read it.
Or like an orchestra waiting for the score.
Or a Greek actor in a wooden mask
its mouth wide open, his lips closed.

16 January 2009

= = = = =

Most days it's still too early—
blackbirds a month or two away
the sun impaled on all those nude trees
seems sometimes a scream up there

only the horizon can help it but that
too is a whole daytime away. Dusk
comes kindly in these latitudes, though.
The pain is mostly how we see these things.

16 January 2009

JANUARY DOUBT

As though a word spoken last year
had now no currency, could
mean some utterly different thing
and we no wiser, our mouths
still moist from saying it.

16 January 2009

THE POLITICS OF THE INCARNATION

I wish it could wait for me
where the sun was yesterday.
But the two of them breathe
in time together, conspire
like a crystal, doing its own
tricks with the light—
and what, Prism, if color
were a suffering the light goes through
so we can know it?
As God became human to be known?

16 January 2009

BRUCKNER'S FIFTH

A child at midnight
walks around an empty cathedral—
Gloucester maybe, or Wells—
sees everything, understands
nothing but the space itself,
the darkness shaped, the huge
silence sensed all around him,
thinks: We are made of this.

16 January 2009

DAY 13-CAME GOING INTO DAY 1-QUIEJ

I was born the day after the day
the dead go out from this world
to some other or some others

I do not know where the dead go
because I am born after they're gone
the whole place where they stay all year

until the going day is empty now
not even a shadow is left of them
because they have taken their shadows with them

or they are shadows and they go
and the world is empty around me
and I am born calling out and nobody to hear

. . . 17 January 2009

THE MAP ON THE DAY 13-DEATH

1.

The day they all go journeying
yearningly into the thing

across the river, the dark blue Next
that is like the blue cloud of speech in Nahua paintings
by which they know what they think

but quiet, its attention fixed on them
as part of itself, a wombland
almost or a cup full of the dark.

2.

This means them. Means them to it.
River no matter – they send
their footprints before them
over the water over the sand
then they send their wishy spirits after
following carefully the fleshly steps outlined
because spirit is so easily distracted.

3.

Or all that spirit is
is a distraction
from something else
that does not say its prayers
but is always there.

If suddenly they
or even we now
suddenly pay attention
that is all there is
to pay attention to.

And while we were singing to ourselves they reached the further shore.

17 January 2009