

1-2009

## janG2009

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= = = = =

That things are or get lost  
in the temple

    `is the temple.

The woman one night by the candles  
tall girl in white in the Delacroix chapel  
kept switching the minuterie on again  
so she could study the saints, lost  
in shadows the limbs of a man the face  
of a woman. I say it again,  
whatever is lost is the temple.

So every color is a god  
in it or of it, a shrine  
lifted, to that woman who  
fed half-francs to the clanking coinbox  
and lit her tapers – what is she saying  
by praying?

    That too is lost.

Only what is gone from me is yours,  
your tears, your temple, weight  
of your body on the kneeler,

    your unknown god.

Where does the prayer or anything go?

21 January 2009

= = = = =

Lest one, late,  
let another in  
and then the gate  
congested turn  
into mad dancing.  
Priests on a hill  
at night trying  
to rule the sky.

21 January 2009

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Most rumors you hear  
are true.  
Except about me.

(woke with that in mind)

22 I 09

= = = = =

Merchandise of my morning doubt  
how can a sonnet not  
be like a serpent?  
A symmetry with teeth,  
a thing folded in upon itself  
to spring forward, a swift idea,  
the fang of mind sticks in  
and leaves the alien protein  
of a human thought to rage  
among our blank perceivings.  
How could music even  
be worse than this? I said as much  
to Karl Kraus one fat night—  
he pooh-poohed me, patting  
the rough stone pillars of the opera house—  
“Music masters silence, poems  
lose themselves forever in it.”

22 January 2009

= = = = =

Lies all lies.

Just squirrels on the snow.

22.I.09

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But no – you *remember* music, I said,  
but the poem keeps *saying itself* inside your head  
if it's lucky and you're not – the words  
are common, as no music could ever be,  
the words once heard belong to you, not  
themselves, and certainly not to the long  
forgotten girl who wrote them yesterday.  
You remember your fingers taking it out  
of the envelope, even, but the words  
once read are part of your house now.  
Music's always trying to make an air  
but these words are what you actually breathe.

22 January 2009

## LICENSE

Barely blue, the Janissary sky  
Broods over Round Top, eroded peneplane  
Love left behind when it wore the mountains down

Down here with us, the desirers, lost  
Under Overlook, lost in names,

Caught up in a dream of saying things  
You maybe want to hear. Your dear  
Soft demonstrations bring me round.

Coma breaks, we wake out of knowing,  
Legal ecstasies of sheer wakefulness  
Nuzzling the such of things, the fur of sense

Dazzles. We've waited ten thousand years  
Yesterday till now. Noon. Wake this.  
Touch this day and all the rest come too.

22 January 2009

[Composed using for the first letters of the lines all the letters I could read on the license plates of cars parked in front of me in the Wal-Mart parking lot in Kingston NY. There were fourteen letters, hence the sonnet form.]



= = = = =

Of course I'm literal  
or it is.

Sometimes things just do look like other things.  
Or knock on some door in the mind  
where the shapes and textures of things are stored.  
And colors live.  
The door opens and I look out—  
in the drawing I see what looks like a burning tower.  
But it also looks like a shoe on fire.  
I'm suspicious of things that look like other things—  
but it's too late now, always already too late  
because once you see anything  
the narrative has already begun.

We do not know how to unsee.  
Or is that what art really is, how to unsee the things we see,  
we think we see?

Already flames pour out of the tower,  
children through books out the window  
to save them, even though it's raining  
and the words get very wet  
as they fall on the people standing around  
the base of the tower, some grieving,

some cheering the fire on.

Inside the tower wise men hurry down winding stairs

thinking about death. Every one is safe:

a tower only burns itself.

Now from the smoke and flame and glow

the tower begins to talk.

All a tower is, is talk, talking big,

answering back to the sky.

Women dancing around the fire

have danced right out of their high heel shoes.

One of them is on fire and the flames rise slow

to lick where her ankle would have been

*empty bone, bone of air*

but she is gone, escaped from any fire,

escaped from all these answers,

instruments, vestments. She has left

everything behind but dance—

the dance looks like the empty

left side of the picture all light and air,

everything the dance leaves

behind when it too has leapt

wildly and gone.

22 January 2009

## THINGS

Things wait for us  
like the sun in the sky.  
Their own schedule,  
their orderly sequence  
is *desire*. Rust  
love us, the pale  
scribble of sap  
leaking down the pine  
bark is a love letter.  
To us. Read it.  
Read what the mind says.

We invented things  
because we were lonely.  
Things talk to us  
*whenever we listen*.

Things were the first words  
in our new language—  
an earthquake  
is a typographical error  
where thousands die.

Tragedy. Revolt  
of the language  
we once composed  
to give us bliss.

But things are long and everywhere  
and mistakes are few.  
I may have said all this before  
but they did too.

23 January 2009

## **DARK RECOVERY**

Said an old man to a young man  
I know from experience how to be you,  
you don't know how to be me  
and I have paid dear for this advantage.

23 January 2009

= = = = =

Man—

a little cap

upon the shaft of mind.

23.I.09

[dreamt]

= = = = =

I don't live here anymore  
but here I am

                  something  
about the river, this very one,  
and the frozen-stiff lagoon  
and the snow everywhere  
but the roads clear

and & but  
make us up

the rest of it is weather.  
Where do I live

said the whetstone to the knife.  
Where is anywhere but here.

23 January 2009

after a walk to Blithewood, glorying in the sight of the same river, pace Heraclitus, I have been watching for years – it isn't about numbers – it is isn't even about 'same' – it's the sight spreading out – where what is there turns into what is seen

= = = = =

To trust my instincts

means to trust the world—

trust that all the years and deeds and passions and sufferings and smallest influences

have shaped me to some purpose

which I can best fulfill by saying what comes into my head,  
respecting my reactions to people and places and things

trusting that I have been made and made correctly

to do the thing that this current instinct leads me to undertake. Dare. Do.

It seems a proud and egotistical thing,

trusting oneself to be right

but it is in fact humble, obedient, responsive,

answering moment by moment the questions the world chooses to ask me  
by using the instincts and aversions and terrors the same world shaped me  
with.

23 January 2009



= = = = =

It is the Ifrits who do this  
to us, not alefbet not elefant  
not peel not feel  
it is the if of them the Ifrits  
the zionists of hamas  
the stern gang of the crescent moon  
the Ifs, the Ifs who look  
across every river and say  
if that were mine and it is

save us from thugs Thuggee and all the thusses of filosofy

instead: philophily.

23 January 2009

*(answering Stein's scholion to Bialy's Parsifal)*

**[from an old piece of paper]**

It's time for a new alphabet again  
and this time let's get it right.

It is right already  
we just don't know it,

the Angels of the Nationalities,  
the Ethnarchs, they have made

every alphabet, and each is meant  
not so much to write the sound

but to encode the subtle differences,  
the way it looks to be us,

the way what we speak shows  
our true faces when we write it down.

But I am a new person today,  
don't I need new ABCs?

*13 July 1998*  
*Naroling*

23 January 2009

= = = = =

Where he sinned,  
there he suffered—

I was brought up believing this rule  
and anything you believe for the first ten years  
always believes itself inside you  
forever after no matter what.

Stalin had his priest say mass daily in the Kremlin.

Because everything only borders  
on Switzerland, the rational, the good.

At night we sleep in Austrian valleys  
dark with sin and desperation.

There is where our acts are born,  
our terrible annunciations.

24 January 2009

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Having opinions about everything  
is not the same as having  
something to say about anything.

24.I.09

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We are commas  
in something else  
being said  
by someone  
we will never know.

24 January 2009