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= = = = =

Disquiet and sunshine
equal to another.
Who?

I spoke a name or two
but no one answered.
Was I speaking Egyptian again?
That happens all the time.
Now I try again
in Old High Silence.

24 January 2009

= = = = =

Halfway between the mind and the world
there sits a little man.

On a boulder at the top of the pass
he looks both ways.

He sees me coming, holds
his hand up, warning me
someone else is coming towards me
over the crest. Who?

Old man, tell me, is it my lover,
my lost child? Is it someone coming
to become me? And leave me no one to be?
But this little man is too busy watching
to answer whoever I finally may be.

24 January 2009

= = = = =

I like the size of this: a thing
that fits into things. Tabs and slots,
thoughts and processes. Name me,
you need me, I am the last
vowel of you.

24 January 2009

= = = = =

But could not say it.

It was small

rafters held a few sparrows who

has been trapped overnight

when the great doors shut

and they became my dreams.

Small quick hungry birds

who for all their efficiency

look so clumsy as they move

snow hop or twig falter

and they were me.

25 January 2009

OF EPIC POETRY

I wanted her eyes to be blue
her coat to be amber

the colors betrayed me and I slept.

And when you go to sleep in a dream
the gods are up to something

laurel leaves smolder in a small
copper brazier behind your left ear—

for three thousand years this text
has been trying to tell you something

but you keep getting distracted
by the story. Forget the story

a story is only there to hold the words together.

*

Achilles was only there
so a few months from now
after the terrible snow you'll let

your mind fill with images of war
and hopeless fire, trying to lay
hold of peace when you look
over the fence into some lady's garden
and see her first hyacinths
color of his hair.

25 January 2009

= = = = =

Further communiqués from a mistake—
the underground goes—
that's the first discovery, that down
is movement outward—
to go anywhere in the city means you have to go down.

Something as radically human as
direction is utterly different for
citydwellers, city with a subway.
To descend into darkness and noise and dirt and rats
to come up to light in another place,
Kew Gardens maybe, and the jets roar over
chattering in the glass of the Palm House walls.

25 January 2009

= = = = =

Not even to dream about it
like the road to your house
past the old wooden covered bridge
the deer hang on the tavern porch
not even the brush of air along
my bare arm when the door opens
and closes and someone has gone out
—who was it? people talk over coffee
two kids pretending to play chess
but they don't know the rules
only the shapes of the chessmen
wooden bits they hold in their hands.

2.

Can an image bring you back?
I never understood you till you were gone
and then there was nothing to understand.

3.

A place far away from any neighbors
even a gunshot could be part of conversation.
There are no churches in the woods
except what the trees mark off by themselves,

nemus, Roman sacred grove, grows by itself
and lets us come and say our masses there
whatever that word really means, nobody knows,
our sacrifices of wheat and wine and water
and the huge crimson bracts of certain winter
flowers that by themselves don't look like much.

26 January 2009

VIRTUE OF THE VOYEUR

I want to watch Lesbians make love
so than I can be gone from the world,
permission to leave the room
and not be missed. They do not need me.
I escape into the silence of being me.

26 January 2009

=====

Woman walking across street in snow
is just snow. Street. Snow snowing
into a snowy street. No woman
but what I see. By sight alone
the other is made. The snow comes.

26 January 2009

= = = = =

Asking for what comes
by itself to the hand
and no more—
you think that is wisdom?

I ask for the hand.

[The *capacity to receive* is rare – it is the real Kabbalah.]

27 January 2009

THE WORLD

Such a small story
to have so many characters.

27 January 2009

HISTORY

History is like an opera—
we remember only the arias
we walk home alone
through the cold empty streets
trying to whistle one or two of them.
And then in front of us
suddenly the door of our house.
We rest our forehead on the rough wood.

27 January 2009

MANIFESTO

Alone be art

by quiet manifesto:

writing, writing

is interesting.

All of it, no matter.

Whether the interest comes from the writer's analytic power or observation
or imagination or sense of order

or comes from the reader's skill and attentiveness and cunning and sympathy
interest is there.

If a piece bores you, fix it.

This is one of your few obligations in this planet—

humble the proud, lift the abject, feed the poor, fix what doesn't work, make
things up.

28 January 2009

PROBLEMS IN WAITING

Wasteland, but his
meant spirit we
mean another order of
virility—

 the candy-striped cloud
the bread that broke the oven
simple subtractions
from the ordinary

against the rising sun
wings of a bat.

28 January 2009

= = = = =

Encumbrances realities dreads
so many words to say
what no one says.

When I tell you Be afraid
I mean caress your fear
like an old friend
suddenly found.

28 January 2009

= = = = =

Too many words before beginning

means no beginning.

Caribou under stunted juniper

or not quite under. Deer

ate our tree of life. Thunder

does not live with winter.

Liberty does not beat a drum.

That's what is known, the rest

is maps and forged decretals,

spiderwebs, mother mouse

setting up house behind the books.

It is what writing means, to ask

by writing down, and every

writing is a question,

what is written when a word is,

how much of it, what part of what

we are doing when we speak

can we write down, or when we think,

that paltry lexicon of human

logic. Whereas, he said, look—

the rime on that bare cherry tree
the exact word lit up by
distant electricity

the tree talks.

We are too busy waiting to listen—
o poverty of human listening
among the trackless wealth of speech.

29 January 2009

THIS BLAMES ME.

And why not?

Everything is somewhere else—
some words we do not say
when God is listening—

I learned that from the skin
of some girl's knee, rough
and tender all at once, can
fall in and out of love

full cycle in three seconds.
The whole world is waiting
for you then like a mother
at the foot of the stairs.

29 January 2009