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= = = = =

towards an Ars Poetica

Make it smaller
pack it denser
it will keep
longer, keep
saying more
than you meant.

4 February 2009

= = = = =

Is there still a chance
or did fortune also
let her wheel stumble
crack its felloe, fall?

The axle of the world
still holds – someday
it will turn again,
but now entropic winter

holds its high harsh note
like some old tenor in Palermo—
maybe ridiculous comparisons
will finally crack our ice?

4 February 2009

= = = = =

Strangled with music
the sun forgives

carved in Latin
that was
on a stone I found

4 February 2009

= = = = =

It dries a different color
than it is. No, the nun says,
different *from*. So different
from it is I am. I too
have knelt in front of Jesus
I too have worn His name,
now I am the ink that writes it down.

5 February 2009

= = = = =

But was there something there
I called a dragon or a rug rolled up
a rat on the horizon inhaling
the smoke of all my stacks

a wooden water tower perched
rocketwise on blue rooves?
A bird told me. And ever since
I have been doing what I'm told

I think I am but never really
knew what that bird said, I hear
the voice of her even so even still
and hearing is obeying.

Someone laughing in the woods,
laugh is such a false sound, laugh
is such a betrayal of someone,
a wife you're not married even to,

a laugh is a betrayal of the sky.
Someone is going to kill me here
because I am a hero and a hero
is someone always already dead.

The ground does something odd
where a hero's buried, a heap
of stones and travelers pour out
a little of their wine on them,

stones, a hero wears stones
the way the earth wears sky
and laughter upends them all,
in cheap resemblances

I have spent my life, my sword
seldom sheathed and even less
frequently employed. The gods
are still waiting for me there,

there being wherever I have not
traveled. At the crossroads
right at my house I heard a voice
more worded than the bird was,

said Your death is in another
country, your death is not here.
And what country is further
than tomorrow? I sleep in dread.

5 February 2009

= = = = =

But one more may have been here—
a flag. A hurricane
remembers warm seas.
Monsters mean me always.

They walk towards me
the way forests do – slowly
and with John Muir's appraising
eyes and John Muir's beard—

the trees (we say) come down
to the water. We have seen them
there, the pines speaking German,
the lindens whispering to bees.

Everything in a certain frame of
mind is a flower. You and I
drinking diet coke in Buffalo
say, or walking off Oswego

way out on the frozen lake.
The north has its mysteries
in the land where nothing grows
but everything knows.

5 February 2009

= = = = =

Care for
what comes
The rest
will follow

6.II.09

= = = = =

Predication is prediction—
that is the force of destiny,
the fate, the thing that has been spoken,
I mean the terror of our condition.

6 February 2009

(To make any statement establishes it in the realm of the knowable, *in-beings* it, makes it an entity before (but automatically on the way to) making it real.)

= = = = =

Take me to another place
the nearly gone. the faraway
whence Gilgamesh ascended
into the Plain of Now—
marveling at human need
and being one with it,
a tired man kneeling on a stone.

6 February 2009

Olin

KNOWING BY THE RIVER OF IT

But what does happen to the colors?

Wise man, wink at child birds
afore they know to fly they're flower,

this is my own

the poor man said
looking at his shadow.

2.

What's wrong about the American art world
is that they're still obsessed with F.Ll.Wright
builder of a few cranky houses for the rich
and pay no such adulation of F. Olmstead
who had the decency and temerity to
build lasting pleasure places for the people—
even the poor are allowed in Central Park.

3.

Adequate essay — back to song,
I mix my genres
as you your genders, dear,
and say what saying has to say

any way it says it — who
am I to shape a box for it
when its own leaf and shell and bract and fruit
come true?

All I'm good for
I let it say.

4.

Try it, child,
don't criticize.
You know nothing
before you've done it.

Epistemologists
wringing their dry hands
taste of sugar in a mute man's mouth.

5.

I sleeked however
warm oil on all your skin
folds and tender amplitudes
and sudden dark departures—

then you were fit to wrestle
and we are struggling too
to escape from skin
all the way in.

6.

What do you mean you can't
see the relation
of these parts to one another
or to some whole?

I am your mother and your father,

I am your little son.

I am your soul.

7 February 2009

= = = = =

I have to start thinking.

The birds are not enough.

To name them

would also be a song

but you've heard that one,

they sing it in your sleep

hunkering as they do against the cold

over the insolent eaves

your bedroom target of all art.

What keeps puzzling me is how

you can really tell apart

thinking from just hearing

what it all keeps saying in your head.

8 February 2009

= = = = =

When you can understand
the newspaper
you know you're too old.

When you read the paper
you feel virtuous and noble,
faithful to that which betrays you

time after time,
chaste wife of a libertine
you are, reader,

at the breakfast table
confident in your own way,
smiling at his lies.

8 February 2009

FULL MOON

But for whom? For all
around beneath – unowned
participant in those who
participate in it. Beyond
it's never full or always is.
We need no alternation
to confound our expectation—
wait — everything knows
everything — just hold it close
between your thighs and squeeze.

2.

Every time we look
up at it in trees
or over your shoulder
squeezed between
medium-tall buildings
as it rises over Brooklyn
seen from the Lower East
Side it is a remake of
the first experience of all
look a light in the sky.

3.

And as it moves we move
constantly altering the scene
where it is seen, blue moon,
white moon brighter than ever,
ruddy ring around it too
ice crystals foretelling snow
thinking of you, nobody
wants to make love just once.
Take him back. The moon.
Life is theme and variations.

4.

The imaginary object
impersonates the moon.
It is omniscient indeed
any thing knows everything.

5.

Ugly little dogs
in children's clothes
pedal tricycles,
a loathsome clown
mc's egregiously
We watch forever
no matter what is shown.

6.

We think it's fleas
that monkeys chase
inside their fur
whereas in fact
it is pure seeking
the hand entices
distances, the skin
touches the unknown.
The flea is an accident
of the quest, a hapless
incident in the interior,
deep in the jungle
of the flesh the unknown
continent. Suddenly
your back in moonlight
and I am healed. Realed.

9 February 2009

RESTAURANT

for Marcel Proust

Sad how the profile vanishes
when her face turns to me
her eyes full of speaking
but without the definition
of those bones that just
a moment before made her
seem to be all meaning,
and so the words her eyes
intend, which she herself
thinks and thinks she means
are incomprehensible to me.
I read the sentence but not
the text all round it that and
that alone makes it make sense.

10 February 2009

Kingston