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**LET ME TRY TO SAY IT AGAIN.**

Bewilderment shaped like a rose

whose scent lingers on my hands  
though I never touched it

eyes smart from too clear  
sight of sunrise over St. George  
never enough sleep never enough waking

Of course language is other people  
suddenly you thought was yours

you start to talk when someone hears

Space cures most irrelevance  
an animal does not distinguish  
himself from his territory

what is mine?

I live in distance

A word on a page  
too bright to look at

A conversation begins in a doorway  
is a doorway. Begun on a boat  
is a boat. A word  
is more thingly than the thing it names.

I am realer than me.

Of course a door a conversation  
bitter jealousy of those who have no door

no midnight

who did not stay up all night talking with

These things take longer to say.

A building in the new neighborhood  
has a new tenant. Who is the name  
does your remembering,  
no name needed,  
  the mind  
is that tree outside, the shadow it throws down  
to meet the sun, it rose  
while you were talking,  
that's name enough for us,  
dawn and its long, long shadow

Every war no matter how far  
away it is fought is a Civil War  
sets father against son, drowns  
the new-born in a cry of blood  
I too have seen terrible things  
but I am not entitled to remember.

There was a town sick with entitlement.  
It was a car, it passed on the wrong side,  
nobody specially died, bided no light.  
But when am I that I can be asking?

And another town, the snow melted  
in a great circle round the crematorium

Suppose it could answer?  
Would each ash among all the ashes  
have her own explanation?

They did this. We did this.  
How to be  
and not be this we—  
that is the only question.

Suicide is not a peacetime solution.

But isn't the war always?  
Has there ever been a day  
when someone in the family wasn't sick?

“ . . . when the whole world was at peace”  
is how the Martyrology locates in time the birth of Jesus  
*toto Orbe in pace composito*

it makes you wonder if Christ  
was ever born

or is he waiting there  
alive in the absolute identity  
“the whole World was settled at peace”?

something more substantial than a song  
but quicker, like a stranger’s touch

it happens to everyone why not me

randomly, as a crumb falls  
from a sparrow’s beak  
and no one but the sparrow grieves

or the smell of rain.

But why is Liberty on the barricades only  
half-naked? What is Liberty  
keeping hidden down there,  
how deep the body is,  
how deep and filled with such ancient  
information, and why does she hide?

Men are led more readily by rumored secrets  
than by spoken words,

Lenin, that телец bellwether, led them by *telos*, the goal held up before  
them, the radiant image of paradise reflected off blood spilt right now

and things fall.

Am I left where the self would be?

Skin always wants somewhere else.

Well-grieved, not greaved, is how  
Achilles was. Sorrow was a sword,  
a kid's resentment, a foiled entitlement.

To say the 'wrath of Achilles'  
led to the deeds of war, as Homer did,  
is to assert that each person  
has something to do with what happens

the glorious myth  
of moral responsibility.

A harness'd race, we vie in fetters.

*Don't hurt* is all it ever says,  
don't hurt me, I am all you have.

And the rose is the one who won't listen.

Did he follow you up the stairs? A man climbing behind a woman is  
climbing into her body. If the staircase is long enough, he may never leave.

I am inside you without ever having passed through the gates.  
Doorways mingling.

We lust commodity.  
and flee propinquity.

And I also was a flower  
something trashy and too much,  
an orchid pressed against your breast



corsage: a flower on the body growing

we wear our bodies for the other's eye

Don't argue, touch.

Don't answer, touch

Don't even touch, touch.

Or was this home, the other place,  
trees walking up to the doorway  
their branches sudden snug around your hips

feelings led me up these steps  
when I got to the top of the stairs  
I left my feelings on the landing,  
let the cat eat them,

the cat cares.

Where I am is wherever it is to be  
that being is, and it alone

is all that matters,  
and I don't even know what I just said,

we talked till dawn  
so many words  
and all of them meant something else.

26 June 2009