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I have to read everything
and know it's true—
the boat drifts on the pond

soon the light will be gone
and the dragon come—

all my life it has lived
close in all my shadows.

4 November 2009

= = = = =

But it should be exhilaration
shouldn't it, books on the shelves,
leaves off the trees, winter
ready to calm our nerves.
The girl is on stage already—
I am the prompter whispering her lines.

4 November 2009

= = = = =

To bring it closer to desire
shift the tree three inches to the Delft.
Watch the ripples. Not every
has gates on the river and how wide
another is. Lovers in their carriages
collect such sights, orchids of going
on the stem of what stays home.
Arguing the mind. We pagans!
Wonder at is worship of. It kisses back.

5 November 2009

= = = = =

Not having done anything but read
The New Yorker he looks out the window.
Day off. What's on. Flags from some old poem
shift in the low wind. Color is uneasy.
Calm me, o gaunt grey sky. Calm yourself,
citizen, this is November. You did it,
whatever it is. He has done nothing
but read a magazine. A long story
about unusual food. Long cartoon on growing
old. Old and forgetting. There are people
who look out the window as a life work.
Apollinaire. His father. The old lady on Haring Street.
And now this. I can't get started, he hums,
missing the point of the old song, love's
not what's on his mind, just the sky
and what to do. What in God's green name to do.

5 November 2009

HOMAGE TO ISHIKAWA

Mostly a matter of waiting
a matter of matter
waiting for the word

Then you know as much
about it as I do
only there's more of you to know

Falsities lying in wait for everyone
not just women
waking up at night to scratch the itch

Is it someone walking on my grave
you think? what if I
die instead in air, will it all be dancing?

I thought there was something better
but it was only more thing to do
a movie you come in late you leave before the end

Vergogna she sings I think means shame
hers or mine or whoever listens
a low note in a high voice is that what conscience is

What they do for love and then
what they do to love later
it is a lion and a leap and a broken bone

Did you come all the way
just to tell me this
or did you learn it only when you saw my face

Count the syllables and divide by wine
no actual apple was eaten in this garden
it was the voice she listened to that broke the gate

the land the land was waiting
and she stood on it trying to understand the sea
never never let anything between us

from some other country with its own maybe
he hoped to bring it home
but the birds paid no attention to his airs

5 November 2009

[DREAM GIVEN:]

What we call ordinary reality
is just an intermission feature
in great Reality. More like an ad
than an opera. It urgently interrupts.

6 November 2009, waking

= = = = =

All the dreams in all the nights
don't make you Arabian
though you have awakened me
twenty-seven thousand mornings
with good news, new news at least,
the birds, the buses going by,
the sky. And each day a story
to carry with me into it, a tool.

6 November 2009

CONSPIRACY THEORY

Who knows where it's waiting—
so much is general, poorly focused,
not even abstract, full of lint.
Yet it's waiting, like a government
anxious to hide its motives from myself,
my sole constituent? Lies and war,
no one can lay a finger on the truth.
We touch without knowing.
If there *is* a conspiracy, it's universal,
we're all in it, a mafia of sleepers
killing each other in our dreams.

6 November 2009

= = = = =

No politics for Friday, Friday is for love,
green skirts and leaves snagged in his hair
and the trees—almost all bare now,
the ones who advertise—easy to walk
among them fondling their bark,
rough locust trunk, smooth beeches.
Because Friday is of the senses sealed
to touch and taste and never tell,
maybe cry, maybe midnight laughter,
silence mostly, like timber
at the full moon time, or like skin.

6 November 2009

NOVEMBER GARDEN

Mint, she shows me, yes mint
and the feeble violet
almost closed in upon itself
of hostia

 and hydrangea allowed
to drag depressive pink
instead of the sky
blue it should,
instead of the sky

6 November 2009

= = = = =

This tries, this lies
Quiet in the same sun
Where can we be
when it is speaking?

6.XI.09

= = = = =

Small steps towards large ledges
then long-past tumbled rock, the night coming
grows out of the left hand, night coming

the machinery always faces north
the operator at the southern end
uses hands and feet to try to locate
the hardest spot on earth to find

the place where one actually is.
The device is noisy, strangely
the more noise it makes
the herer you come.

Until you are here
absolutely. But the night is here too.
Nocturne. Even your hands remember this.

7 November 2009

MENISCUS

mortal curvature
moon on fingernail
as bright as that
or the little lift
of water in the glass
when it meets the rim
the edge of things
over which the future looks,
moony
landscapes of the prophets
harsh-shadowed with deceivings
unwilled yet pleasing
the way moonlight is
in autumn woods
hinting of large animals nearby
or snow to come,
a fox in either, a fleet
of hungry deer.
Will the moon be city there,
a sluggish sea-bird
drifting all too long above,
into that dome of light
tomorrow pours,
cold fingertips,
music in a distant room.

8 November 2009

THE OTHER ONE

But what would the other one be,
a pyramid?

I wonder
then I wonder if every
questions summons its own *angel*
speaking strictly,
a *messenger* from the Answer
bringing peace.

So what would a pyramid be,
a shapely fire, a loaf
set aside to nourish a dead god
whose tomb is the whole world?
πυρ, fire. πυραμυς, a pointy loaf of bread.
There are worse things than bread
to worship.

Roads,
moonlight on roads—
they could be your answer too,

your lover's eyebrows pressed
none too gently beneath your fingertips
to learn the bone.

So this song
comes to grief
and does what it can,
it licks your hand.

8 November 2009

NOSTALGIA

I miss the things I used to have ,
the pens I used to shoot.
Green armchair I learned to read
books in a thousand years ago,
I miss that too, its rough upholstery,
its ottoman on little feet. Out
the window a row of new houses
stuck up where my field used to be.
But I forgave the pale brick,
I could still sit in the chair and read,
a cut-glass candy dish beside it
on the humidior with copper lining
and no cigars, an empty dreamy
box on long spindly walnut legs,
I would open the door and look in
to the quiet friendly emptiness.
Nostalgia is not a place, it's things,
we live in things and things carry us away.

8 November 2009

SUNDAY'S TESSERACTION

Cast of characters a bunch of fish
old newspapers a man with a string
and only a string, then the string itself
whose long soliloquy concludes our life.

□

The new arrogance begins tonight—moonshine
glints on shovels, stars cast shadows
we can't see, is that a ghost down there
or a tree in ladies' underwear? Where?

□

How do the vintners put to use
their barrels that spring leaks?
Do they caulk them, singing, snug again
or sell them to women to pound in the dark?

□

Were you even close enough to a ladder
that elegant hypotenuse, to slip between it
and the patient wall? That is the shape of time
itself you passed through or do I mean its shadow?

□

I mean when you pass between things
you go out of this world for a moment
into another one next door, close and dark
like hiding among coats in mother's closet.

8 November 2009