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CHILDHOOD (1)

The intellectual content
of a cupcake augmented
by the spirit quotient
of a banana equals time
spent in school. At least
you can't smoke. Nobody
asks you real questions
just teacher stuff, questions
where the answers are there
already, with open mouths.
This isn't what you need,
the hard shit the night throws you.

14 December 2009

CHILDHOOD (2)

Not young. Not again.

A world of little nevers

in the window of a shop that's always closed.

14 December 2009

DETERMINANTS

Does he know
the meaning of any word he breathes?

Imagine that all the dictionaries are wrong
and when real live people say
cat or god or good or pair of shoes
they mean things far different from what we mean,
things we don't have words for.

Imagine that all the words
are just seeds waiting to germinate
into things utterly different from
the paltry singularities we assign.

Imagine anything and you're halfway home.

14 December 2009

= = = = =

The dead create
because the mind creates—

in the Bardo they speak
we hear them sometimes when we sleep

on the frontier between the two Bardos
voices carry.

15 December 2009

(woke with)

= = = = =

They are waiting for us
by the empty swimming pool
dead leaves down there
and the bones of a bird
mid-sized, owl maybe

and they are waiting at the rim
as if that sunken rectangle
also was one more page
in the endless exam book
we have to solve

solve
for bone and solve for leaf
love then solve for emptiness.

Then when all that's done
answer who you think they are
the ones who stand around
so many things, the ones
who are waiting for us.

15 December 2009

MARQUETRY

means something else
like adultery
so many different women
to make one wife
is what it means
if a woman is wood
and a wife's a table say,
fitted together
all those identities to be one,
and none of this is so
but it sounds so like itself
you have to push the door a little—
clean empty kitchen, mouse beside some seed.

15 December 2009

PARLOR TALK

We belong to each other
a different way inside

Inside the house there are rules
outside the house there are laws

Ile unarme againe
makes sense in the parlor and only there

Parlor = the talking place
the parley

between the war outside the house
and the bedroom war inside the house

There is safety in talk, there is danger,
all talk and no action.

And there are things to believe in—
keep true to the score

and the music does its work—
but words like true elude the root

the root is somewhere deep below the words
not in language not even in parole

but in parlor, parlor talk,
the actual symphony of hesitations,

confessions, evasions, bonhomie—
we talked and the time passed

and did us no harm, talked
and the sun went down and no one died.

16 December 2009

= = = = =

And there would be another time
to come when this is true:
pale curtains blush with sunlight
and suddenly a man just knows.

16.XII.09

= = = = =

You have to see it to remember it
and then you do and there you are—
women waiting for him at the well.
Each one of them a cup, that he might drink.

Wherever you go it is Jerusalem
just over the hill,
whatever the season it is hot
you are parched,
the road is a mouth that gapes before you.

Only these women at the well
can slake your thirst
so at last you can speak the word you have to say.

16 December 2009

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Customers galore
but no girls at the door
to show them in

no little boys
to take their hands and say
Please sir step this way.

It is a strange store
we inherit from our uncle is it
or someone long gone

someone who loved us
and left us here
to sell his merchandise

no guidance but a white word or two
scrawled on a black wall
or a cough to call attention

to some item better than the rest,
sunset, waterfall.
Leafless shrubbery shivering in the wind.

17 December 2009

= = = = =

Add one by one
until you have one.

Go two by two
until you are two.

It is no longer desire
it is recognizing

strikes like steel
off the flint of the other.

To meet is kindling
deep light no fire.

17 December 2009

= = = = =

What is this quivering fibrillating thing I'm coming
to know, meeting people being already in them
already they are in me and nothing to be done
an effortless *entrada* but later the effort comes
to know them as they know themselves as they know me
give voice to that instantaneous entanglement
that has nothing to do with desire or only the shadow of it
once fell athwart our joining then light coaxed it away?

17 December 2009

= = = = =

Runners on our sled
are iced with urine slick
to speed—we carry
warm supply—the day
rises at 10 AM and ends
past noon I have been
here too often before
it helps to think of flowers
red ones except at dawn
when blue grows better
spectacular hydrangea
most intense shy gentian.

17 December 2009

= = = = =

Just don't get serious—
heaven is too close
and has big ears—
I love you because
you're the only one of your kind
and you have to be there
for everyone. (I volunteer.)

18 December 2009

= = = = =

A day will come
when even this pen
will need to be refilled.
That's why cathedrals
stand and suns go down.
Other things follow —
a bird brings ink.
A woman calls.
What's happening?
This door used to be
made of actual wood.

18 December 2009

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Gracious interlude—
the mailman burdened with shiny catalogues
trudges through the snow.
There is some meaning here—
something about a naked man
dying on a cross, flies around his eyes—
but it slips my mind.

18 December 2009

= = = = =

Now dye my hair October
and my right eye wake
an April morning. The stomach
of a waking man is seldom full.
Arbitration? Maybe, but cooking
sherry stands by the gas range
ready, all too ready. People say
hello and then they go—one way
or another the road to hell
is not as easy as the Romans said.
You need to defraud young painters
and make poets work as undertakers—
then Satan might sit up and notice
you. Always you. Or maybe not—
he's seen too much already.
You can no more depend on malevolence
from the devil than you'd expect
sanctity from the local bishop.
Sit calmly in the barbershop and think
on all these things. Christmas music
makes me want to be in Borneo.
But not for long. The razor glides
along my jawbone, god I'm hungry.

18 December 2009, Hudson

= = = = =

When they don't trust you
it's like the movies. Munich
memories then the Brenner Pass
in sleet like certain poets
in the world before me
down into Italy. Veneto.
Names enough to fill
a little book with history
love song and remorse
with no need for any
other words but names.
Just names.

Roadside crucifix
a live man sitting beneath it
looking sketchy — it turns out
we all are Christians after all,
Jewish Christians, Moslem Christians,
Buddhist Christians, no chance ever
to escape from that
blinding thunderstorm of,
blizzard of grace. Don't
look at me like that,
I don't much like it either.

18 December 2009, Hudson

= = = = =

Catching
something simple
as a word
there's so much
to remember.

18 December 2009