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ESCAPE

1.
Something caught
was a small one
did you think I could run away from you
and not get caught
in the mountain the cleft the cliff the cave the fallen
scree stumble a slide a small ruin
and there it was together on the rock face like a dead child
a dead child
2. Armageddon manners
it was weather first
struck us the rain down the collar the ridiculous suffering

just to be in a place
is terrible

the cellar warm enough the mould mushrooms small between the stones
there should be a bird
that flies in place like this

bird under earth
3.
finding its way too

so many broken pieces places
a phone ringing in the rocks
how could there be anybody here

not even me

can a thing heard a long time ago
just hear itself again as if out loud
and the mind too when broken let something out

as the moon bleeds shadows all over the rocks
4.
he outran his shadow
and rested
panting gently
like a dog and then
quiet like a rock and then
had to go on again
dawn is so far away

had to get to it before it got to him
5.
scraping sounds then deeper
a dog in the sky maybe
and the sound
crumbled down, around
6.
things from the sky wrong

so often
the sky breaks
7.
this is nothing they can hear
the ones that run away
the ones that hide in the shadow
later they hide in the rock
in the fire
the ash

25 November 2008
never happened.
Male homosexuality is disdained
or prosecuted in those societies most
that retained in a fragmentary way
the core of human history, how
men were first cloned and programmed
to serve the purposes and pleasures of
what we call women
but who were the only humans
at the start of things,
not our mothers but our engineers.

Well they wove
yet fell at last in love
with what they’d made,

whence all the rest.

Years ago I carved this on a dogfish tooth
and lost it after,

there was no vessel and no sea,
a railroad running through a wilderness,
Minnesota maybe,

the roar of it.
Anyway the trees.

26 November 2008
It doesn’t take long to read all the books in the world, you know all that stuff already likely, you’re still carrying around *700 Things For Boys to Do* from 1913, they still believed in numbers and in things back then and boys sat around all day in the snow wondering what god had in mind dropping them here in the wilderness crowded with insolent grownups who had forgotten everything they ever knew, that even boys had a grip on, pleasure and weather and keeping an eye on what was growing, or going.

26 November 2008
Quick as a candle when there was no quicker and a silver in the window broken
three raps on the floor
as if that was the real door
and anyone who came to us
came that way
up into the heaven of our hope

where it is mumbling we do, the horn
rosaries of our devotions, the buttons unbuttoned,
the vertebrae interpreted
by our firm fingers

while in the mere neighborhood we hear the dancers

and through the cracks between the floorboards
a mist like you see in the woods in the gloaming
rises and takes on the form of whoever it is you summon
out of the impossible into the virtual

and there the two of you are, you with your spell
and your guest not silent, prompt with answering words

but nothing can be written down. Be careful about that.
Write it in wax and burn the wax.
Write it in air and breathe the air.

Knock again and let the invisible world prevail.

26 November 2008
all the what the’s
won’t identify
a single phantom
gliding (they
glide) like a hymn
tune in the graveyard

into the firm
form of a shadow
by the chifferobe

(they called it)
in a child’s
bedroom: mystery

lives ever after.

27 November 2008
COUNTING

Of course 8 would be a problem
it is balance

an acrobat
falling off a tower
never for one instant
abandoning his smile

but what of 7?

A plow
speeding through the sky—
with such mindset
in the teacher the pupils
soon create another planet

Hebrew is spoken.
Ducks fly.

6 is (Joyce tells)
all insides

six curl up or
are around
or try to—
curl up around yourself, bee,
hex hive,
    geometry is just a local hammer

I suck your sweat.

27 November 2008
BUT OF

her whose mosquito bite
had not by vinegar
but by not stop touching
to be soothed

but it was bigger
than any such pique
but ‘just keep touching’
seemed to work
but not the invading
finger ring finger
only slow admitted
and sudden in dream the squeeze of actual

but the phone wouldn’t dial or I
couldn’t dial it it
stammered between one button and
another the numbers
could not remember themselves

everything was always wrong
and we forgave each other

not me and not another.

28 November 2008
Boston
Next comes the posture called Dream With Me. Sit back to back. Your four arms elbowed backwards are linked together, locked: male right over female left, female right over male left. Pull tight against each other. Brace your arms. Close your eyes. Pay attention. Pay attention. Pay attention.

This is the costliest survivable entertainment still possible in the world.

28 November 2008
Boston
So many dreams
marry in one night
taste of a finger

28.XI.08
Increment

Four older men are sitting around a table not playing cards. Perhaps they are talking, but for a moment forget what they’re saying or not saying. One is sixty-three years old, one seventy-four, one sixty-seven, one fifty-one. Put them together and they contain or maintain 271 years of human experience—equivalent to the time that has elapsed since the only known occultation of Venus and Mercury ever directly observed, a celestial phenomenon that occurred in the year 1737. Now what can our four men do with those two hundred and seventy one years of experience, pain, desire, appetite, satiation, greed, remorse, indifference, laughter, dream? Four men, capable, alert, speaking English, sitting right now at a table, and what do they know? How smart any of them would be if he had at his disposal all the insights and remorses of the others!

How can we so affect them that all the awarenesses to which those years brought them can be added together, carried forward in one great sum of learning and feeling, just the way numbers can be? Our whimful scientists must be brought round to the value of developing a system, or perhaps even a thingly device, that will accomplishing precisely this moral arithmetic, so that no man’s thought is wholly lost.

28 November 2008
Boston
(30 November 2008)
IN THE REEDS ALONG THE CHARLES

There are foxes in these faces—
army-eyed, she poundeth
on the open door— arraigned
before the actual, we swoon.

No brittle polity arms round
meek citizens. Death cult
dressed in neat khakis.
There are no Pyramids

in Egypt, the moon’s a magic
mirror that shows us only
what we think. Who we?
Round-eyed swooners, noses

deep in theories —logic
loves you— logic saves—
the irritable animal you love
grows from a pretty ankle,

then what have you? Dawn
over Gravesend seen from the island.
Twilight of the mistress race.
Landfall on the final cloud.

29 November 2008
Boston
Who could see a sailor
over the old marble
floors of the museum when
such an edifice was
the enshrining place
the privilege offered
to the lofty eye
unsolicited to praise

a sailor a scuffed shoe a flock of children
staring at a naked god

that’s what it was and what the art is,
this in your face

the arm around you at the party
saying This is a higher power
come to us now through us now
by this touch you are alien as a star
we burn in each other.

29 November 2008
KNIFE

Knife cuts rain
rain falls

the bad boys
pick up the broken
spikes of rain
and throw them

the bad boys are God.

Sometimes I think we are His arrows,
their arrows.

*

Little boys like knives
but his mother took away
a gore-drenched knife
a soldier brought him from the war.

There is always a war
but seldom a knife.

He looks for the knife
all his life.
The evidence, the blood,
the rain.

*

War rain is blood
knife milk is blood
but blood is sky
inside, heaven
trapped in ocean
trapped in me

*

him. Him who
the knife kissed
read. The point
of the exercise
was the exercise.

*

Bring me back
a God from the war
I have no brother
only blood

I can hear it
hum in my head
some mornings
when I slept
on my right side

and I seemed
to be someone else
as I slept
and woke a third
person altogether

someone with blood
in the ears, no
memories, no rain
no sky round this one.

30 November 2008
But who could that be
the long merchant
of studious idleness
I took for my master at seventeen

read everything do nothing
touch whoever you can
and sleep while other people work
even the moon gives too much light.

30 November 2008

[And now after fifty-five years I can’t relax. Whenever I try to, a voice inside me says Get up, get to work, you had your vacation.]