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[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

A night's sleep. You heard it. Or it was a knight's sleep. Something that happens to a flower. In a flower. A good knight. Sleep is like the German *knecht*, a servant, especially a good servant. Whom does the night serve? Purposes everywhere! Like flowers two-thirds of the year. It is mysterious, any flower. Sleep.

*

Cautiously iterative descendant of policemen probes the hollow tooth of the day itself. With his tongue. This is called 'speaking.' Later he writes it down, in Irish, the sweet taste of yesterday, danger, decay, corruption in high office, unfocused lust, endurance, nobility in spite of all ... all the things his tongue had found.

*

Some trouble is always another language, some trouble is your own. It hurts to be here I've heard it said. The rocky road to now. Time is our chief entitlement – do I have time to be now?

*

Aping the innocence of childhood, the driver asks his passengers, Is it now yet? They groan, dismayed to find themselves once more traveling in someone else's habit, to an unknown destination unlikely to be desired.

*

Hope. It never spoils. The gaps in her attention span matched the sprockets of his insolence. They got along. When he spoke he always sounded as if he was quoting. And when he was quoting he seemed to sing.

*

Why should they have names? They aren't going anywhere.

*

Or it depends, the way the clock does on the clock tower or the tower on the sky. The same concept covers miles of difference. Light years. It is not a joking matter. He wanted her to depend on him, hard, but already he had run out of sky.

*

6 December 2008

[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

Cast while there are wings waiting, flap your arms to keep warm. People watching will think you're speaking, and will seem to understand. The gentle heart is prompt to reason.

*

Persistence in love is like an animal. Richly furred, nervous, moving but not swiftly, seen from the corner of the eye, December, a little snow coming down from a flinty sky. Who are you I can't forget?

*

From on high they do not pour a message, they pour a *form*. This form is beauty. You hear it, feel it, it shimmers around you, in you. You fill it. You fill it with your mind and heart. You fill it with what one religion calls mind and heart and soul. This is called meaning. This is what another religion called the Eternity of the Qur'an.

*

Imagine it otherwise, the antique iceboat all polished mahogany and waiting for the end of winter when the frozen river slushes nicely. But here it is barely the beginning of winter, months before, and no snow yet. It rests like a hammer without a nail. Polish it some more. If there's one thing the world likes to do, it's keeping people waiting. On the other hand, everything happens at the right time. So one of us must be wrong. Or maybe not? Roosevelt's iceboat at Hyde Park, I ran my hand along the gunwale. It will never skim again, will it? Will it?

*

Clock time will never get there. There is outreach in these matters, gifts of Solomon, bunches of dried flowers — how long we've been at the fair!

7 December 2008

THE WITCH OF THE HOT NIGHT

It was the running itself by the river itself that laid that hex in me. Or I stood still and the river ran – the same. The witch had me, inside and out. There was in that hour, you could have seen the steeple across the river still, where a dog was barking and people went in and out of church, no place that was not the witch and what she wanted in me and what she did. That is the way it is of witches, you've heard all that before and never fully believed it and I'm not certain enough to believe it now, but what does it matter what I believe, what is belief to a man with a witch on him, her will in his wits, stumbling, I really did stumble, through the pampas grass between the river and the tracks. Shabby little river but it did its job. They tell us of a big river that meets the sea, they send us postcards of it doing that, and them standing there with their feet in the surf and bottles in their hands, I've seen that, but all I know is a river that comes down from the hills and runs through most of my life and finally mates with and gets lost in a bigger river. Rivers are spiders to each other. The witch.

To this day people find six-inch long spikes along the tracks, used to hold the rails to the ties, they're not always rusty, iron, iron, I thought they were good against witches, iron, I picked one up and she made me put it down. She made my fingers flare open, the spike hit the toecap of my shoe, didn't hurt, I kicked it aside. I licked my palm where the spike had been, tasted the rust. I wondered if the rust would help. Rust in my mouth. You get so old when you live by a river. The river takes everything away, never stops. Up

there in the pinewoods you can think for an hour you're standing still, but it never is. Nothing ever is.

She had me all day and let me go but not before it was dark and cold in me. Colder in me than in the nice hot night. I wore a hat, I cried a lot but she wouldn't listen. Why should she? I was hers, the rusty words in my mouth did no good. Pray all you like, she said, prayers don't touch the part of you that I do, she said. Rusty words.

I lay down on the tracks, there hadn't been a train in years. The rails were cold and silent, no humming. Sometimes they're a quarter of a mile long, each rail, did you know that? An engineer told me, a man that builds railroads and rebuilds the broken tracks. A quarter-mile. She had left me alone. I held onto the steel, steel is iron with diamonds in it, right? But the iron did me no good. She had finished what there was of me. She and the river and the hot night.

8 December 2008

[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

Can this chemical embed reality in what had dithered on the outskirts of
only? In coffee houses long ago they sat as long as they liked in the
vocabulary of rational smoke. We live to talk.

*

Strong aftercurrents lend some splendor to the sinking freighter. Scuttled by
its owners, have done with property. An hour later the sea is almost
calm.

*

Insurrections of weed in public gardens augur woe. Afterludes when
prurient hidalgos watch every step of the departing ones. If only a
sheriff were a good man, or were even sure. *Certainty* is a religious
disease, hard to cure, easy to catch.

8 December 2008

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Cautionary posture,
don't do like me
full flat stride in
 but slow—
 as in a man
 walking sideways
 through his mother's door

to answer the telephone
 who
picks it up and undeserved is
answered by silence.

 What a strange bird
that is, tu sais, the music
she never stops.

 Tais-toi, not even sleep
can muffle that encyclopedia—

I hear them now, angels are they?
No, he is walking through his hands.
A tongue tip
 peeks between fingers,
 index and medius,
and his chin looks like a raft

far out at sea,
Celebes on the horizon,
so many names he's tried to be.

2.

Answer the fucking phone, darling,
it's the museum again
they want your Nativity
since you gave your Annunciation
to the Prado,

like they need it,
He's been born already
you keep telling me,
what's now is now.

They'll dig him up again and call it springtime,
no need for all those green people,
the lilac people,
the soft rain.

8 December 2008

WEST COUNTRY

There are places I remember
their names
are built inside me

how can water forget the mountains
the little lake
from which some overflow
rhines its way to a small sea

and everything goes with—
I'm too tired to tell you when.
Or who. Or why.

8 December 2008

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so he said Philosophy

is what you do right now,
Hegel is history, and Plato, no
different from Sardanapalus,
from Vietnam, from Waterloo.

And I am doing it now
he said, these random names
invoke a pattern in the mind
where random things go to die
and leave behind, powerful,
the ivory of increscent significance,

right now, philosophy has
no texts no commentaries, all
it has is what it does
in the huggermugger in the head
to grasp a thread of sense
and follow that to calm

he said, where understanding
sheds its words the way
old men slowly kick off
their galoshes when they get home
dry, warm, watch at peace
rain fall hard against the windowpane.

9 December 2008

[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

A knight in sleep's clothing motionless athwart a fallen tree. I am in Narraty again, the land where fools tell stories and wise men listen as they please. This knight is not so evidently listening. Perhaps he has been killed by an earlier gesture of the story and is now dead. Or else there is a music in his head that keeps him from hearing. It says something else.

*

What do you do for a living she asked. I lie. Why do you lie for a living she asked. Why do you lie. Why do I live, he answered back. Everything is for the sake of some other thing, nothing is for its own sake. So are you for me? Truth only happens to a lie when you listen. One of us is for the other. Who?

9 December 2008

FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF IMPERSONATION

You who were nobody
in somebody's body now
be your own sweet self.
Wait while the dye soaks in,
rain falls aslant your ears
oil makes your fingertips
slip easy on each other,
sexy as the clock on the wall.
The doctor can't see you now,
you look like his wife too
much his daughter his Porsche
getting wet in the gravel lot
where he has his own
parking space marked out
like a map of the New World.
Right now a pigeon is
voiding on it. And you
are almost yourself at last.

9 December 2008
Hudson

= = = = =

Things close lying to the window
are shadowed by raindrops
as if they too were getting wet

and sliding not too fast
out of this simple world
that people can see into the
archaic obscurity down there

basement memories
haunted tree roots stretch
out to touch to strangle or

all the lovely people
you lost long ago.

10 December 2008

[An Impregnation]

Far from God as
words make us think they are
they really try to be angels, the close
their eyes and scheme of meadows
with naked priests and priestesses
wet and lush,
 the shadows of their bodies' folds
look green in sunshine,
then wet,
 everything wet, the world
 is one wet place,
even the dry brown leaves
under blank trees
conceive of that moisture, Thales
 was right, we are
pregnant with time,
 and time too knows how to flow.
One human country
is nothing but water, one idea
borders on another.
There is no such things as a lie.
Everything is like water
touching everything
or nothing in between.

10 December 2008 (workshop)

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Coarse design fine
execution: the world.

What happened, happens, is: our wills blurred what our minds perceived,
we perceived the world into existence out of greed or fear or simple appetite,

but every little thing we do, does so beautifully get done.

What hurts or breaks is the anger in the whole machine. Or could we learn
to love anger too, and take anger as one of the cases in the declension of
love?

Maybe $\mu\eta\nu\iota\varsigma$ is not just the cause of that war the *Iliad* sings, but is the
foundation of the world.

Or don't we need a better epic, fast?

11 December 2008

MANIFESTO

But not these thoughts—
always in the middle begin
when the arrogance of beginnings
dozes down

 and the work
itself takes over, one
word leading to the next
almost by itself.

 That
almost is the angel
keeps from flarf
and self-expression both.
keeps the innocent candidate,
the *moi*, safe grounded in
the patience of attending to.

Call it the dancer's will
who unlike the rest of us
has no awareness of his feet,
so let that will bring
all that we forget
into the act of listening.

11 December 2008

= = = = =

If you didn't know opera
you'd think the soprano was trying
to discover something.
That singing is *research*—
and the lyric pulse (in tone, voice, word)
is itself *investigation*.

11 December 2008

AN OBOE

sounds like an obligation.

A star reddens unseen
behind (right now) the river.

Soon arriving light, I
love thee, thee who
like god and lover can
by 'thee' be called
such that thou art
the actual (it seems)
body of the One
that you impersonate
with breath soft urgent,
mind ever orient.

11 December 2008

Tetragrammaton.

But which four
of all the signs
sign thee?
Four letters
(or three with one
used twice or two
used twice each
or one used again
and again) four
letters and not more,
four letters of
an unknown alphabet.

It is like science now,
only the numbers
are clear, not
what they count,
point to, specify.

No one knows
what four means either
or what they are
so holy, only that
there are four of them.

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