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PRAYER DURING POWER FAILURE

Put the light back on
so I can sleep.

11.XII.08

[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

Put it all into prose, like a lock on an unlocked drawer. Or a rose dropped into a glass of milk by a child smitten with color. In love with it. In love.

*

When I say 'rose' you see red, even if the flower's yellow you are just fed up with such referents. Don't name objects, let alone qualities, you say. Show me relations, you say. You are a critic, a god of middle earth. But you still see red.

*

Nothing works but it's worth anything. Polar bear, we call them, ice bears in Germany. Who are you really under your sweltering bear skin, darling?

*

Are you an airport yet, to fly me to that ancient Saxon place where bears
have horns and speak in what they claim is poetry? Alliterate your
way into my heart. Pick my favorite consonant and become it over
and over again. Make it sound until I see.

*

12 December 2008

= = = = =

One line for every syllable of yours
till I who have not a thing to say
have said it all – the dreams,
the weird off-brand auto called
Imperial, its base model the “Marvin,”
the seaplane coming in for a landing
over the streets of Flushing, tiny diner
with a long line for the men’s room,
and the dark car parked by City Hall
with Carey Harrison in it and a monk
friend of mine, both strangely com-
panied by unscheduled women, both
men a little shy, I told a man
beside me just to have something
to say how I would love a seaplane
to have one to roar down on Long
Island Sound for a landing by night.
He said nothing. All the new
Marvins in the dealer’s lot were
shiny two-tone green and white.

12 December 2008

= = = = =

Where could other a wonderment!

We have all been writing the second half of the *Tractatus* for eighty years
now.

Committed to observable fact yes but who
is the privileged observer who
sees what with such trained eyes?

13 December 2008

= = = = =

Truth was for standing there.
Around the big clock someone
had relieved of its hands.
But it still stood for the sky,
the thing that turns, goes by.
Moon at perigee. Truth
is for reckoning a guide
to living has no need for.
Tell me what you mean.
All I can do is touch you
is that enough is that too much.
I can make sense alone
of what is shown. *Gezeigt*
means fingered, pointed out.
Not a name, not the Judas kiss
that meaning gives to speech.

14 December 2008

= = = = =

I don't like what happens in my head
my thoughts are travelers who've stayed
too long in some vague town quietly
appalled by the desires they've fulfilled
just by hanging around on the dark street.
And the sound of the wind never stops.
The weird mistral of being me
drives me to suicide one says and another
looks with yearning at the river. But that's
not open. Water doesn't work today.

15 December 2008

= = = = =

Stay home. The day is *aj*,
the *aj* is good, sounds backwards
ha, a house. *Aj* means reed.
Or deer spelled backward. Home.

15.XII.08

= = = = =

Last night a young deer's head
rough cut from the body lay
at the foot of the steps. A house.
Once they built homes from reeds,
splattered mud on them and waited.
Thousands of years. Now stone
steps whitewashed and a deer
erased they say in heraldry, body
running vaguely in the woods,
the head at our feet has its eyes
wide open as we step up
into the old house to hear.
Poetry. The old stuff turned
at last into our heads so there
is no place we can get away
from poetry. The intelligent
eyes of the deer, the backbone
hacked away from the back.
Something moving in the woods.

15 December 2008

= = = = =

The grey light this morning
is Amsterdam: these trees
are pretty girls on bicycles,
the leaves are water and our
birds are young men loving them.
Paradise on concentric canals.
And everyone speaks English,
the light is old light: comfortable,
flattering and true. The air
I can't guess yet, I'm still
indoors alone with my eyes.

15 December 2008

=====

All my life

I am this one thing:

a postcard on its way to you.

15.XII.08

= = = = =

It looked like a crane
in an old Chinese painting
coasting slack-winged towards the moon

but it was passing
headlights on a rainy window
a blonde locking her car and walking away.

15 December 2008

= = = = =

Can you catch fleas
from a pillow in a dream
you find on the floor
of a crowded train

how many dead men
rested their heads on it
before you finally
found a seat and sat down?

Halfway to waking
my neck began to itch
and the question frowned
about fleas and dreams.

Night is nothing
but questions. Where this
train goes is a thin
greenish old country.

A dream says: Wake, or die.

16 December 2008

[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

An avalanche of epidermis and the girl was on my knee. Winter. Wainscot.

We have an obligation to one another based entirely on heat. Feed me.

*

The ocean is a limit, if only a limit of sorts to our senses, or to us. Or to our desires. Horizon is no size, has no length attached. "Explain how to measure length," he said. But I found nothing to explain.

*

Aporia of the wise. A word is one, every word is. An irreducible mistake, that is, a god. A god has no parts. Limbs, yes, and we are those limbs perhaps, in a golden dream you had once. Limbs, but not parts. A will, yes, but not his will.

16 December 2008

[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

Open, as a door. Or dove through the air, a brief uncertainty. What it meant. Means. And then the landing. Only when it's done does anyone actually know.

*

Hand-carved certainties of a blue mind. "Weather me," he cried, because the ship could not. At the jetty heavy waiting. Went on for hours. He was a hero in our poor eyes. Dazzled as we were. In fact, we're only accurate when we're asleep.

*

Brackish. Shallow near the playground dangerously close. There did drown his Grace the Duke of Kent and I looked on, perplexed at feeling nothing. Not even tears. Not even fear.

17 December 2008

= = = = =

I heard Death come up the steps,
she came onto the deck and looked
in the dark window at me.
Here I sit reading, writing, surrounded
by what I want my life to be,
the endless liturgy of poetry.
Maybe for her it's just palaver.
Or maybe she loved it too, thought:
This is a perfect time to strike him down
while he's happy working hard,
this is the hour when he'd die
in character. For the life of me
I don't know why she at that moment
decided not to stretch out her hand.

17 December 2008

[EXCHANGES]

Enterprise used to be the one
you called on phone company
business no charge for call.

Other less obvious non-
personal conversations also
happened here, in those days
actual people at the other end
miracles of strange advice.

*

Gedney was always dangerous—
girls a little too cute
boys who spent their nights
at basketball or even worse.

17 December 2008

[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

So many things to start waiting again. Waiting is always an aggressive music, an iron sign post rammed into too soft ground. A sign with no words on it.

*

Is color a word? Does a color mean something? Why sometimes does it make people cry?

*

If I could put it all into words it would be another man's, and would be another man saying it. The sword too is not an original remark. And even my silence has quotation marks around it.

*

I found the page I was looking for, where the last philosopher gave away his secret. Surprisingly, it was the first page.

*

The element missing from ordinary certainty is conscious decision. I know this is so and I know that I know it. Hier stehe ich, ich kann kein anders. God help me.

*

And that was the Reformation's fatal gift to philosophy: bringing the Will into the science of the Mind. Fervent belief instead of simple knowing. What a servant the Will is! Worse than Faust's.

18 December 2008

= = = = =

Lift the garden
off the ground.
Look at the history
it leaves. Written
underneath it
the print of what it knows.
Shadow of chicory,
shadow of sage.
Once we lived
on the lives
of what these shadows
also remember.
Now send the garden aloft
till the friezy, frondy fullness of it
inscribes the clouds.

19 December 2008

[THIRD PERSON]

Just before sleep
there is a third person in the room.
Wake up to write it down.
No. Sleep now. No.
Sleep. Next morning
no snow. Start
to think, open the book
I think in, says:
last night there was something
what, a third
person in the room.

*

The book I think in.
Thinking with my hand
makes something happen
near my neck
I call 'remember.'

The light of the blank page
shines up into my face
and illumines the lost country
from which so briefly
we speak.

*

The light of the blank
was not there in the night.

The room was dark,
we were somnolent,
a man and a woman,
their breaths quieting
towards sleep.

The rhythm of the dark
was beginning. Then
there was a third person in the room.

*

There is something unspeakable about tomorrow
where the light is stored.

I promised myself to investigate
this person who suddenly was in the room.

At the point where philosophy and poetry
both approach nonsense there was
someone standing by the door. No.
In the corner. Someone in the room.

*

This person who
is in the room
no matter how many
are in the room
is always the third
person in the room.

I fell asleep hoping
I would not forget
to wake and write down
this about the third
person in the room.

Instead of right then
asking the third person
who and what and why
and why now and why
this night then listening.

Rationally the third person in the room could be myself, the ghost of the
future, specter of my morning to come, the self now writing it down.
But it was not he, or me. It was the unknowable. The living presence.
Maybe. It was the third person in the room.

19 December 2008