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= = = = =

breath breathing against
is what we give one another
sad glad or the sweet
to happen, free to be thou
on our own breath warm
the weight of your own

26 December 2008

THE QUESTION OF ADAM

Was Adam Jewish?

So much depends on this foolish, profound question.

If yes, then we are all of Jewish extraction.

If no, then all Jews are descendants of converts. Of gentiles.

If we could believe firm-heartedly in Adam, then anti-Semitism and Identitarianism would both be ridiculous. And (we could hope) disappear.

Omnes sumus Judaei.

26 December 2008

[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

Turning the breath to another page the woman sat by the window reading her book till the light was gone. It was not a story, it was words, one after another, and as each appeared before her she thought about it until it led her somewhere else. Then she'd go on reading. In this way she became the story that the words told.

*

Thinking is a kind of lukewarm water eased onto the dry soil in which a houseplant had not long ago begun to put forth a green shoot from its old bulb. I felt remorse, because once I had quarreled with a friend because he had used the word 'soul'.

*

In any marriage you have to do the first word first. Otherwise the cars full of wedding guests race through the border crossing scattering rice. The grains, grayish, bleak, are supposed to bless you. Turkeys come pecking over the snow and find each grain. There is a life that hides from us in trees. Young people sleep, feeding on scraps of melody.

*

How long to break a song's bone? Quiver so full of arrows I can't hear.

*

Pluck a line from a pool of ink. Pluck a darkness from the closet. Nothing is easy. Thread the bow. Bend the light, notching it to the bowstring, then shoot it back at the sun these silver days of winter. Cloud gash spills. Crow on hillock, snow.

*

Blind Muse. Is that the phrase I read as the page flashed by in my hands? I could never find it again. Still, those are the words that came into my mind. Where do mistakes come from?

*

I could never find her again. As if she were blind, and needed us to see for her. See with our dance. See with our mouths. Words. And I was blind too – couldn't see the words, anywhere, that once I saw. Any more than I could see clearly the white stars whose precise

discernment and detail were the change of Urania, Queen of Heaven,
first muse of all.

26 December 2008

[*Sorrow's Map*, continued]

Cry all you like as long as you like. No feelings embarrass or fatigue me,
why should they. I am here for them. Or for you. It isn't clear yet.
Will it ever be.

*

As it is, I am a brief pause in your identity. You can fill me with whatever
feels most in you. The pause will last as long as you wish. Breathe it
into shape. For there is no time *inside* a feeling.

*

Tell me where time does live? Is he a barber facing a myriad different chins
myriad mornings all with the same keen razor? Is he even now in the
root cellar smiling fat, turning over the turnips and parsnips gathered
late and kept fresh over winter in a big box of clean sand?

*

I thought I knew but I forgot. Trails open as I speak, carefully marked with
little colored milk bottle-caps nailed to trees at the height of a tall

woman's eyes. Follow the color of your choice to its own vista.
Choice. Red to the beaver dam, green to the tower, yellow to the tarn.
The blue is meant for horses, aren't they color-blind anyway? At least
to the colors we see.

27 December 2008

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As accurate as maybe
the clock hungers for you.

Rapture is also music
but not for long.

Then
the great helium-parcel
floats off the noosphere
and it is to sleep.

It is
to anything as a dream
is to a book. That is a book
you can't close a book
you can't shake out of your
hands.

Things stick
in this world. World
means a wrap of all
you can't shake loose.

I am a scholar of tension,
retention. Nothing
is calm. Why nobody
anymore writes a song.
A song is now, and
now there is no now.

27 December 2008

CAPTAINS UMBRAGEOUS

Never ice skated even once. Nevertheless we have gone down deep into the shadowy places of earth. Music. Poetry. The light coming gorgeous through a dirty skylight on 8th street and we were young. And the women. Pleated skirts the curtain of the Temple. Or say the rosary with your fingers only heart beating like the subway. We were new to metaphors those days and everything was flesh and everything was book and streets were more like maps than maps were and showed you the cold truth. They go where you want to be, follow them and you will discern what it is you want to be or know. Breathless we talked the street home.

27 December 2008

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Let me read the quiet
book that animals know
leaf by taste or moon by twig
until it tells me who I do.

*Hollow words out
to learn your name*

it tells me,
you are the people who think you have names.

But what do people like you do,
how do you call yourselves?

*I call myself this space
where now happens,*

just call me Now for short.

28 December 2008

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Is the sun trying to trick me
coming out on winter day
like a straight-nosed blonde
peering over the rim of America?

What are woods for
but hiding in?
 And how can I
learn to lie without words?

28 December 2008

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Let's imagine the sky is a poem
let's imagine the streaks of blue and grey
and gleaming silver
streaking in from the northwest
over the river:

 seen from Clermont
as the lines of the poem.

What do the lines say?
If they wanted to have words in them
they would have spelled out/strung out words.
All they have now
are spaces where the words could go
and that's where you come in.

28 December 2008
(dictated at Clermont)

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These are the quiet measures
when the sky knows how

molten silver and winter cold at once
streaming out of the west

the light incarnate
knifing through the clouds

gold inside silver silver inside cloud
sky nude fur glisten.

29 December 2008

= = = = =

Eventually it all comes back.
Every sincere means of making
word or image or some such thing

will always avail again.
Fashion is a commerce
but truth is naked of such fortune,

truth has no fortune but itself
and has no time to be more or less
than itself and always

so always the truest gesture returns.
Sincere means when the mind

is absolutely victim of the impulse
and has no thought for good or bad.

. . . 29 December 2008

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Faces in the water
not just in fire

the devil's calling card
I saw float past me

a spermy gush
of rock whitewater stream

and from his instrument
made a sound the color of a cloud

and my body was at peace
inside another.

That's how stars are
he explained, a star is union,

no one ever is a star,
a star are, root two-ity of the substance world,

not even thinking can think 'one'
since there's always one more:

the thinker thinking it.

29 December 2008

=====

Was it a devil?
Some kind of angel
with paper wings
wet around the fringes
hip like a sun in the sky.

29 December 2008

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So they built a fireplace
on the moon
out of nice ordinary bricks
and filled it with pictures of fire

the way a child would draw it
orange tongue with pointy tips
and sooty curls for smoke

In ten thousand years this
decoy fire will
summon real oxygen to feed on
and flood the moon with atmosphere,
one more triumph of art.

29 December 2008

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Listen to whatever happens—
how dare you want
one thing more than another?

How dare you want something to happen?
Happen is always by itself
a quiet music

behind all the stuff you listen to,
air waiting inside the silver flute,

the bone flute.

29 December 2008

ON THE ROAD TO METHOD

Putting the words where *they* are
not where I want them to be

I learn their wishes by listening to their apparencies:
location, rhymes, resemblances, fragmentations, derivations.

Axiom: Words take exactly the form and sound they need at any given historical moment to be of use to us or the 'world' or whatever Potency gave them to us.

Not the stream of emotive speech/howl ill-partitioned into words, but the words, those seeds, themselves.

Every word a seed.

I look up and see a red poinsettia on my table, and its word spills open, says poet, pines, Seti (the pharaoh), point, pain, inset, Tia Pina, all sorts of things and persons I need to know, to tell. Not by anagram (which always makes different words) but by *sampling*, always forward, the same direction the word runs. Or straight backwards. Because a word belongs to its own contracourse.

29 December 2008

APOLOGIA

There are things
in this pen
I woke up dreaming of
how long it's been
faithful fluent
forty-six years,
things.

But why
they say do you dream
of pens, you dry
scrivener you ghost?

Not me, I dream
of things, of all
the words it can write
down and all the
life the words point out,
sunrise, woman in a tree.

30 December 2008
the Koh-i-noor Rapidograph

EVA

Was it a pear
she clomb
and who
saw her how
perched on a sly branch?

The story is (as usual) misconstrued by our dominies. It is really the story of what Eve did to the snake. The snake is man, is me.

And we writhe before Her Majesty ever since, anxious for her glance, for one moment in her thoughts, for one taste of what she holds in her mouth.

At the beginning of the story the serpent is the wiliest, wisest of all the beasts of the field, the Zoas. By the end of the chapter he crawls in the dust.

Oh when will they learn to read the Bible right, that is, backwards, sideways. So much wisdom is cross-word puzzled in it. Sometimes I think it has everything we need to know.

30 December 2008

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Did A really say that to B?
Was C listening?
The looks on their faces told all.
But all was not enough.

30.XII.08

= = = = =

It is as it is with flour.

Sometimes there is not enough left
to bake a loaf of bread.

But there is some.
Can we bake a slice of bread?

Quantity is quality—

a large thing is of different substance
from a small thing of the same substance—

this is a fairly bitter rule
and it is life.
But as such partakes of the sweet.

Call it puberty for lack of a better time,
the puberty of language
the oven where all our loaves are baked.

And at Greek Easter the garlic and lemon smeared roasting lamb.

30 December 2008

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Things are brittle
when I sing to them.

30.XII.08

= = = = =

Of course by then it was almost time
but it is always time.
Because time is not a finished thing,
a sleek coherent animal trotting at our side,

no, time is a parcelly thing, a bundle
of stop and go, attention and neglect,
old clothes and fine new skin,
moonrise and a lot of snow,

it takes a long time to be now,
even now it's not complete
and all the palaver helps to make it come
but can't stop it from going,

what a desperate thing it is to be in time.

31 December 2008

= = = = =

Stuff the wooden shoe with moss
then put it on.
The soft and the grim
comfort you a while.

How hard the hill is high.

It speaks inside you
natural as air.

I like the long of you the lean
inward from the small white wind

as if the air our only space had
little centers for the small
fierce wind to wind itself around
now here is there.

31 December 2009

= = = = =

A chisel working nothingness.

That is the point of the day.
A face found in soft white wood,
pine, I suppose.

Birds I can see, cardinal
sparrows black-capped chickadees
mourning doves.

Hear nothing
but the snow that makes no sound.

Even textured, like a girl's skin
you don't even have to touch to feel.

31December 2008