

5-2007

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We would speak about it in later years,  
one more story that never ended, left  
us guessing and fitting the pieces together  
always certain we didn't have enough of them.  
A pattern of liberty and loss. A color  
– mostly memory – and a sound like  
the notes of a simple tune played all  
at the same time so no one could tell.  
Tell means hear how things that happen  
together have and are separate destinies.  
Telling me from you the old books call it.  
Or how these violets differ from the  
presumptuous and ever-present grass.

6 May 2007

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Maybe I don't remember enough  
to have a story.

Some old movie, *The Thin Man* maybe  
who never looked particularly thin to me  
but then nobody was thin in those days.

And their démodé dog. That  
sort of thing I remember,

I ask a lot  
of my friends, leaping and so on  
from subject to object, getting  
the names just wrong enough you  
think they might be right.

There never was  
a German Empire, there is no city  
anywhere named Shanghai.

I wonder  
if I'm pronouncing correctly these  
words and persons who don't exist – worry  
is good for the bloodstream, a steady  
agitation about this and that.

Wear down  
the opposition with uncertainties! Paint the sky!  
Is that what I'm trying to communicate?

6 May 2007

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Poetry  
even if it does nothing else  
it maps the moment of the mind.

[Enough of it, those, over a few thousand years and we might know who we are.]

6 May 2007

## PHAEDRA

Why have I I wonder never  
paid much heed to Phaedra

too much I and not enough she  
in me for me to find the key

to those sorts of feelings I  
who never had husband

never had son never was  
in love with anyone

who wasn't somehow me?  
Even writing her name down scares me.

I am a surrealist standing at the window  
with my back turned to the street. And yet

there are times when I secretly think  
my mother was the ocean and my father a king.

Does that bring me close to you, sallow  
woman of a certain age, in love

with the one person on earth you couldn't be?

6 May 2007

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The Pakistani driving the cab  
is your own body. Or  
you are the princess in the Chariot  
being carried right  
out beyond the Tarot cards  
into the inconceivable actual  
where I am is waiting for you.

6 May 2007  
for Mary Reilly

= = = = =

When the fibers reach the house  
they bring strange messages.  
Do you want that kind  
of light in your house?  
Like a bathtub you consecrated  
to your turtle collection  
weeks ago and now what?  
What on earth are  
any of us ever going to do?

7 May 2007

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And even the young girls are fifty years old.  
Something changes. An oboe  
then the bassoon, then the light  
went out. Music does that.  
You wake up very old  
with a dead cigarette in your fingers.

7 May 2007



## **FLOWERS, or why I will read you poems from my books**

[for the *Green Hermeticism* conference]

What is a flower.

The playful rationalists who run the sciences say: the sexual organs of the plant.

Nice. But one unknown is not explained by another.

We would know more about flowers if we knew what the sexual organs of an animal are.

We know what they do and what generative functions they perform.

But what are they?

The flower is the most conspicuous, most displayed process of the plant, whereas the genitals are the most hidden.

In what sense then are flowers sex organs?

The rationalist is always confused between function and identity, as if a thing is only what it does.

Which means it could not do another thing.

And that is just what a flower does,

It is what it is and does another thing.

2.

Tonight, in this place, we suppose ourselves to be investigating the other thing that a flower does.

The thing called healing, but that our ancestors thought rather of: its signature, its place in the structure of the world.

To know the signature of things is why we're here.

A signature is an identity sworn to, made explicit. The signature of a flower  
(or: the signature that a flower is)

Is a contract made with us, not because we are special, but because we are  
woldlings, inhabitants, old-timers, born with the place.

I will think about the flower called the hydrangea. It is not famous. Let us see  
what we can know about it.

Know by poetry. It is blue.

[7 May 2007]

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When he says blue  
he means things are far away  
like friends remembered through a haze of gin  
then, not now, he hasn't had a drink in years.

But all those old altitudes  
and riffs of spirit are still stored  
in him – where else could they go,  
the world doesn't have an elsewhere

does it? When he says green  
he means a Christian hope in Buddha-fields  
all round him and to come  
when he meets himself at last and his self

turns out to be Christ himself,  
the world doesn't have any extra selves,  
just oneself in all of one's coyote guises  
Juan Faust Parsifal Saint Francis Milarepa

we all die young even when we die very old.

8 May 2007

**Spagyric note:**

To solve: the immense mystery of what a *crystal* is,

a crystal is the dream of numbers when they sleep,

or their sleep is our waking,

or a crystal is (to speak in the language assigned to flowers) the sugar of time.

*Sac. Temp.* it will say on the old apothecaries' jar.

8 May 2007

## MOIETIES

People, and people you don't mind doing favors for.

People, and people you'd rather not touch though you like them well enough.

People, and people you'd like to touch though my might not like them much.

What is touch?

Touch is the *enactment of propinquity in spirited matter*, with pheromones obligato.

8 May 2007

## PRELUDE & CHORALE

1.

Organize the tiers  
that climb the dome  
until – tiers ever diminishing  
in circumference – the  
highest tier floats unsupported.  
This is where authority.

Like rain through a hole in the roof  
once left smoke out too  
in a day when together meant  
being bodily anew.

All music turns out to be about touch.  
All architecture consoles you in your loneliness.

2.

Just in time  
you've come to me  
to learn the meaning  
of all art.

Every painting  
on the wall  
is your dead mother.  
Grieve.

And every  
written word  
a barked command  
from a weary old

schoolmaster  
dying of repression,  
dying of drink.  
Only silence

silence comes  
along and helps,  
sometimes silence is  
a little scratch

a little scratch  
the light shows through.

9 May 2007

**NO-SEE-EMS OF EARLIEST SPRING**

come feast on me,  
a kind of natural good [ *chö* ]  
every living body  
knows how to perform,

the ritual is built in,  
feeding the ghosts  
that fill all space,  
giving little gnats  
something to drink.

They think our eyes  
pools of fresh water  
glistening for them alone  
in the desert of the air.

9 May 2007



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If you could only walk through some door  
into this moment. If you could just be here.

9 V 07

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When the word wakes up  
it will slap many a cheek  
bite many a lip,  
when the word wakes up  
the admiral will set sail  
guiding the famous lost flotilla  
bravely out into the néant  
most of us know best  
from the chalice of some flower  
like a daffodil that we bend  
to our lift to us and sniff deep  
forgetting or not knowing  
that this kind has no smell,  
no fragrance, just a feel  
of freshness, so we're not  
too sorry that we bothered,  
by now the fleet is out of  
sight on a grey morning

gone,  
so somewhere we speak of me as a friend,  
a *konzertführer* to certain local musics,  
somewhere an angel practices  
pronouncing my name in several languages  
hope he gets to mind in my lifetime—  
that strange clock less Dante and more Dali  
that sets the pace for other people's mourning,

ok,  
the flower empty as the sea,  
just the fragrance of a fresh day,  
we're back on track now,  
the word is waking up.

10 May 2007

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Plenty insecurity  
scared of waitresses  
since they belong  
to everybody hence  
her attention  
is a competition  
just to make her smile.

*O just be here  
when you talk to me*  
he prays  
in his head.

What good  
is a prayer  
he doesn't say out loud,  
a prayer that God  
can't hear?  
And who is God  
in this parable?  
And what is a word for?

10 May 2007

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A gnat nipped  
the pinna of my  
left ear upon  
the sunrise side.  
Morning in general  
has too many teeth.

10 V 07

## WRITING LANGUAGE

I don't really know what it's doing  
but I'm trying to lift a stone bigger than I am  
off a lawn I don't own and make it float  
legal at last in the lower dialect of sky  
where everybody can feel it and like what they feel  
and take shelter under it from the rain and you know  
all the things that wind up coming down  
on you and me, what they used to call a parcel  
of trouble and nobody but you and me  
to unwrap it and see what's inside.  
Because (you said just last night) curiosity  
is a virtue too, but is it transcendental?  
We'll see I guess when we get the box open  
and see what she in her wisdom left inside.

10 May 2007  
*for K.S.*