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THE DEATH OF LENSKY

Смерть Ленского

Not Olga. Not the snow
in which he stood
waiting to be killed. The duel

itself. The usual. The society.
The way that all things go.
It is easier

to die than live. Something
about honor. Something about love.

The sounds of words
linger in the poet's mind,

even the bullet in his heart says something,
what language is it speaking?

But he gets the sense of it
at last and falls.

5 August 2007

TRÜBER TAG

To see the sky again
grey close
as if come calling
after all those
days out in the blue

now here she is
close close her skin
I understand at last
the earth's her
lap I bask.

6 August 2007

AD

Something here for everyone
it is a book
of poetry that is to say
a book of beginnings
only, all the sketchy elsewheres
suddenly here.
But nothing else.
Now what to do?

6 August 2007

PECCATOR

Don't you know that I am he,
the one who did the sins
you're so fond of reading,

I am the one, and everything I say
is a lie to myself
I have to test for true
to explain me to myself,
to console.

That's what language
does, gives
a shimmer of deception
to keep me from seeing clearly
all my stupidities and crimes,

crimes for which punishment itself
is only one more gimcrack consolation.

When I lie in my bed alone in the dark
sometimes that's the closest
to truth I come. Then sleep
arrives, the ancient sickness
that is our deepest consolation.
Healing is forgetting. Awake,
health is freedom to do wrong again.

7 August 2007

= = = = =

Everything I do is wrong.
And even that's a consolation,
comforting generalization,
a little snatch of graveyard song.

7 July 2007

= = = = =

Time to catch up with myself
another. Voices and fences.
Making the doll talk.

The way you press its belly
and the frog says urk.

No pond, no tree. Something
in the ear itself
reaches out—

they never tell you about that
in school till it's too late.
It reached. You listened.

7 August 2007

TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT

You're stuck forever
with what you've heard.
A word.

7 VIII 07

= = = = =

Karma hurtling now.
I can't say bad
even about a single blade of grass.
Everything holy, and holy it seems,
and the true light lands on it.
And only I am wrong.
And why am I not holy too?
Or am, but only in my silence.
I make too much noise
in the endless corridors. I speak.

7 August 2007

= = = = =

hat under eye
under machine
screen under light

speech say me
look up and say me
here for you am.

7 August 2007
Red Hook

CITY

A city sounds right
but never meant.
Just said.

A joy,
a construction site.

Roadwork a place
over which to else.

7 August 2007
Red Hook

= = = = =

If I were wise
or foreign
or could invest
to decide

The ones who died
were a tree,
the leaf
anonymous.

It is like something—
south? Street
in a suburb where
they still know how to die?

7 August 2007

= = = = =

Death and girls
what else is there to talk about
limits of the craft

the sledge of art
drags Czar Peter through the snow
to found a new city

beyond the actual.

[outtake from *Fire Exit*]
(7 VII 07)

= = = = =

Sweat it out
no sense
make make

sense make no
make touch no take
out sweat not think

bitterman easy
clothwit August snow
eating meatstew

under mountains
sense no tell
waiting for the midnight stationmaster.

[outtake from *Fire Exit*]
(7 VII 07)

= = = = =

Come back after all the dying,
be Coleridge walking around Devon
be a word in anybody's mouth, be the sea.

[outtake from *Fire Exit*]
(7 VII 07)

= = = = =

A wind comes out of sunrise
to create something
is to take the place of something else

room for every word
but tell song begone
let sense stay

no guitars in foreign gardens
no flowers but the ones she holds
firmly on her way to the vase

Outside the window two men discuss
the various courses of brickwork laid
using their hands to describe

because this house is made of wood.

[outtake from *Fire Exit*]
(7 VII 07)

= = = = =

It is sunrise all day long
and a wind coming out of it
is what never stops talking

it is the beginning still beginning,
the heart is something
that still has to be done.

7 August 2007
(from *Fire Exit* notations)

ÉTUDES SPAGYRIQUES

1.

Lay the burden
down. A dog
will come.

2.

A day will come
when every preposition
will be obsolete,

when everything at all
stays just where it is.
And you do too.

3.

The solvent of distances
froths in athanor.
There are no more places.

Crystals pick up vibrations,
messages from nowhere.

4.

Staring long hours
at the living face
of liquid mercury
the operator sees
accurate visions
and familiar words
in an alphabet
he almost knows.
Little by little
he is poisoned,
killed by what he reads.

5.

A pheasant walking in corn fields
prepares him.
He recalls what he has read
and it's all unsatisfactory.

It does not account.
It does not add up to what he feels.
A bird walking.
A woman he wants to know.
The sheer resistance.
The resistance.

6.
The character
sealed in skin.
The nerve of things.

8 August 2007

GOIN EAST, MISTER?

after Harry Partch's US Highball

When a man turns
his back to the evening sun
where else is he to go?

He pretends to his wife and children
that he's going to meet
the new sun rising

tomorrow, out of Colorado,
Kansas, Chicago, Cleveland,
the new sun, the new chance.

The opportunity.
But it is always the same sun
the one that slips past us.

And where will he go then
when the east is done?

8 August 2007

ARIOSO

A high sweet voice lifted
every field's a graveyard and
a battered Kelvinator
on its back, its door ripped off,
full of green water.
Mosquitoes. Their voices
not half so sweet. A man
proposing to sleep in the field,
the stars above him
going off like bells.

8 August 2007

= = = = =

Or let a word overwrite another
of course the palimpsest
of course the autumn breeze
in August already—
the first day when time shows

through the vines of letters worked together
an unborn word shows through.

9 August 2007

= = = = =

Experiment.

Bare brush.

Ink on the loose.

Meaning

prowling in the undergrowth.

9 VIII 07

= = = = =

answerberries it sounds
like who could know
the green road across
what you were thinking

with scissors the way
or boiling, the precision
of a surveyor needed
in the woman's lap

be honest be Aeschylus
there is always someone
cooking there is always
water we know that

it is here before us isn't it.

9 August 2007