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THE PLACE

for Charlotte

There is a little house in the woods
near the river and never far from here
but hard to get to: boulders and bushes
and bare stone, bare earth-slides,
almost sideways you have to get there

almost as if you were going someplace else
but there it is, one little room, one closet,
no kitchen, no plumbing, full of light,
soft old green and white the painting,
snug, no mildew, and some nice old books

not too many and fairly neatly ranged
on a dresser or two and on a floorboard
where it meets the wall, books you
seem to remember and used to wonder
where they'd gotten to and here they are,

a couple of dozen, it does something
in the region of the heart when you see them
and you begin to leaf through one or two
remembering, but remembering what?
You were never here before but this is home.

This is what it's about, whatever it was,
the journey, the idle strolling in the woods,
the workweek, the chapel, even the river,
it all was just about this, the impractical
beautiful place that is just what it is
at last. The place that knows how to forever.

22 November 2007

WOOD

A piece of wood
leaves the tree.
This hurts
them both.

But soon they sleep
into new shapes,
become some things
only incidentally

wood – a handle
a door, a chair.
And there they are
alienated

not just from what
they were but
what they are.
A chair.

A chair makes
the best of it
always. A handle
holds.

But there is
a long dismay
built into
made things,

we think it's time
that ruins them,
it's not,
it is their faith

in themselves
suddenly restored:
I will be wood
it cries out

and the chair

cracks, the person
falls.
Made things

are so fragile
so innocent,
the deep grief
of matter

is in them.
It is them.
It is all
we ever hold.

22 November 2007

SEMINA

Decisively the bees arrive.
It was an empty planet then,
just bare rock barely cooled
and nostoc tumbling from the stars.

The bees did all the rest:

wove water from the beams of light
crisscrossing airs they carried in their chests
water is the ash of air

then they spilled their fire and the work was done.
Everything else grew out of seed
the ones they brushed off their sticky legs,
their weary unrelenting angel wings.

23 November 2007

= = = = =

Sweetest of wrong numbers:
dawn in the sky.

24 XI 07, Boston

= = = = =

It woke me it spoke to me
it woke it spoke
no me, just waking

the east is vague
apricot in milk

that way the sea
continues us.

24 November 2007, Boston

= = = = =

There is a luster
to the time
that naturally falls
breathless with age,
all their anxieties
stored in cartilage, ribcage, bone.

Once they greeted morning
with a hippo yawn
now stalled half-breath to waking
they pray: Lord give me what I've got.

24 November 2007
Boston

= = = = =

I never sleep well in Boston,
it dreams me hard here

the night, and not one dream
pleasing to go through or remember,

Morning's a slow shudder of recall,
wipe out. Dawn

just changes the subject,

24 November 2007
Boston

= = = = =

Play the Book of Job
as a comedy—
then you'll see what it's like
to be me or to be anyone,
dream-drenched,
ill-cured by waking.

24 November 2007
Boston

RAPTURE

It happened
long ago.
It was called time

and we are in it.
Heaven is not
what we supposed.

25 November 2007
Boston

= = = = =

When you are so close
to the dream
you can't see her face
your hands tell you

it is she and not another
but what do hands know
they themselves are other
even to each other

the dream dwindles
into a little sense of loss
of something not
long ago you possessed.

26 November 2007

= = = = =

Tell me what is there
for your sake. A sketchbook,
an old drawing of I forget.
None of such stuff. I am
though, if that's of use,
pervinca in winter
sometimes in the unlikeliest
patches of new snow
flowering blue.

26 November 2007

= = = = =

It's still the day before,
I pour a lifetime's insights
onto the schoolroom floor.

No one pays attention
to the ghosts in the hall,
floaters in the tired eye,

Pentecost fires
crackling in the skull
and the temple hums

again, heavy
with gong aftertones—
emotion is the decay

of perception,
leave your mother
and run away with me.

26 November 2007

ALREADY

I feel it in the way you move your hands
or watch me move mine.
Already some part of us has fled together
into a place that is a suburb of Away.

26 XI 07

= = = = =

I knew the color of the wall
because I saw it through your eyes
I looked out from your skull
and saw the wall as you drew near.

26 XI 07
(Ava's experience)

Scary – how could people *not* see through each other's eyes? That's what language actually *does*.

= = = = =

Of course there were things waiting.
It had to do with wallpaper
we quarreled a little about the color
the pattern until it was realized
only one of us had actually seen it.
It was closer to purple than green
but what was it. Whose room
it graced would make another
argument. You still seeing him?
Not actually seeing, more reporting
to him now and then and he to me
dreams mostly, a neatly framed
postcard of a double- bed.

27 November 2007

= = = = =

I am ready for my big mistake—
just then the pen ran out of ink.

O happy failures of made things
that spare us from our vain intentions!

Felix Culpa has been in and out all day
looking for someone to buy him a drink—

wheat grass juice and Sambuca
he favors against the inclement glooms

of late November, a good old friend
he is, but weighed down by adjectives.

27 November 2007

EAST SIDE

The glass was ready
but the girl was gone.
Alphabet avenues
descending towards river—
won't we ever get to F?
A scary island out there
once meant for lepers now
saddled with the affluent.
I've been in better bars
but my head in my hands
always feels the same.
Wake me before I begin.

27 November 2007

= = = = =

Don't you realize how hard I struggle
with incoherence, for it and against it
saying always the first thing in my mouth
spit it out and try to coax you to make
sense of it by music alone, the dull song
of what I say next next next.

No wonder that play is such bad luck,
the trees themselves get up and leave
trying to comfort one another with bare arms,
shuffling at me through their own dead leaves
and you all think it's just flarf and metaphor
stripped of -phor, just vacuous transfers
with not a soul in sight. Randomness,
you irretrievable, insatiable mistress,
you all-gone mamma on the other side of fear!
Paramita of abandoning anything I meant
to say or thought or thought I feel. Wordy
silence like a kiss behind your warm ear.

27 November 2007

= = = = =

Ready to resist – heaven
had a violet sky, angels
were painted on it going in and out.
Boys and young men, curious
no one ever sees an elder angel.
The hakim pointed out that all
true angels were exclusively shown male—
but the truest image we can have of God
is as a young woman, someone quoted
from the Greatest Sheikh. And so it went,
ontology, the one-upmanship of living
forms deciding precedence, which lady
I get to take in to dinner, her pale
lilac-scented glove oddly firm on my arm.
Angels at every door, at every chair. Rough
voices in the kitchen make us doubt our food.

27 November 2007