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NEW YEARS DAY

There are corrections to be made
the natural force of things makes new
but the fluency must be maintained
the radio said or else how will the gods
know we are in our proper places
polishing marble with our tongues
and picking rivers up from their beds
and wielding them like whips
castigating truant mountains till
the very light obeys us – then they
at last will notice what good children
we have impersonated and will bend
sleepily over the horizon to bestow
one more eternal day and tell us Wake
you have done work enough in dream
now wake to ease and comfort
quiet lunacy of the first day's snow.

1 January 2006

POST APOCALYPSIM

But what will the scroll say
when after the moon shall have rolled up
like an old scroll
Someone yet to be named, maybe Somone
yet to be born, unwinds it
and holds it up to the eye and reads?
These are the things to invent.
These are the words to find
still wet in your mouth to be speaking.

1 January 2006

RABBIT RABBIT

Rabbit rabbit white rabbit
from hand to hand it goes
a fresh clean clear with fresh clean snow
tempting us to believe the best of things
again, as if we were flesh

and the candle wick a mile long.
But still I get the sense
I am a sparrow on somebody's feeder
and how long will my breakfast last
unvexed by falcons or run out of seed?

Always room to run around the tree
I'll catch my shadow yet
and you'll be the first to hear
the information I'll make it sing
my hands squeezing hard the neck of the dark,

stool-pigeon shadow, lingerer behind,
you have watched my every move
and understood the bleak intransigence
of man and matter, maybe
you are my mind, busy guessing

and your guesses are the stain beside me as I go
darkening god's marble world with doings,
desirings, fumblings at the doorlatch of the queen
while the plow struts up and down the road
hunting for catastrophes of snow.

1 January 2006

A PRAISE OF COMFORT

snow blade scraping pavement
literature has nothing much
as clean as that sound —
maybe bronze in Homer
or Padmâvatî grieving.

1 January 2006

THE LITTLE MYSTERY

Amid all the certainties
taste for some doubt—
sugar in your tea, honey

you'll never know till you
hear me say it if even then
if either of us notices

how the word sounds
what the other means or even
what we mean in the heart

that smouldering ashtray
full of old love,
something you can find around the house.

2 January 2006

=====

The thing that is waiting for me—
how could it hide in all this desert
flat as Dallas and the sun setting?
That's the answer: they hide in the night.

That gives them at this season a dozen hours
to do their worst, then the sun comes out of the Gulf
and bruises them, and every man is free to shoot
stab maim disable the poor stragglers

the human ideas who dearly want to find us.

2 January 2006

=====

I mean you can really think in the night.

I mean flowers fall out of the sky.

I mean the caves are full of children singing
surprisingly deep voices of the unborn

chant to us from the ground – that makes
the monks' voices so deep, that makes

the cubic crystalwork of salt taste like heaven.

What would we do without it?

They call the broken pieces of the sky what we call snow.

2 January 2006

CAROL

That there *is* an industry to it
a shiver of rigor,
in fact a rigorous dismaying,
Christmas kirtle
snug round her hip
and a sung thing, a carol
(we three kings of occident,
accident, what do i
mean) or canoodling:
like making out with saints
under the flicker shadows of

what kind of church *is* this?

I want a clean saint.

I want a subordinate clause

that leads back along the parse path

to the primary remark,

the very word from which I come.

2 January 2006

=====

In thee over and under I am born
again and when, and then again,
I am your white perhaps elephant
unprofitable real estate investment
text shelter, broken lease,
but whatever it be, it is a lot of me.
And yet I am a long subjunctive—
I dreamed all night someone else's dream
all about shady speculations and coming right
my picture in the paper and another name,
I want my own name in the night!

Do you understand, I am tired
of having other people's dreams.

2 January 2006

DOUBLE BOND

Snow obeying gravity, light
too, but differently.

How strange it is to think
of light as an obedience.

How strange light is,
the unseen capacity to see.

Dark is the norm.

As if we live an illusion

gladly all day long
seeing this and that.

Only the blind must know the truth
what the world really looks like

they know the natural,
the dark. All the rest

is temporary stuff, Sisyphus
rolling that bright stone

every morning over the edge of the world.

No wonder the natural is fear.

3 January 2006

=====

Don't be angry

tell a story

the myth will meet you

more than halfway

the bruise

at the bottom of the cup

the slap that makes

a friend forever

we are afraid of wounds

but wounds make us one

injury is in jure

in the law, links us

to those we hurt

who hurt us

we live in law with them
citizens

of a sudden opportunity
me and my friends

our country
hidden in the country.

3 January 2006

=====

The sun is out.

That means to tell.

Delete all family reference—

no one home.

The bodies turn out to be birds,

they lift the sky

and fly away with it,

but leave a little bit behind, just enough.

4 January 2006

SKIES

to Vertumnus, god of growth & seasons

1.

I bought my sky from a stewardess.

Three days later she called,
something was missing from the transaction,
what could it be?

She liked the money I had invented for her,
poured into her palms.

I liked the sky she had woven for me,
draped it round my shoulders.

Yet something was wrong, she felt,
she was calling to find out how I felt,
did I feel that way too? No, I said,
I was content, but I'd be happy
to meet her and talk about it some more.

So that's what we did the next time
she flew in from Hong Kong,
sat in a nice coffee shop, miserable
flute music playing nearby.

Something about the way she heaped

sugar into her latte gave me the clue.
A woman needs more than one sky,
I just realized, she thought then agreed.
I went outside and bought a sky
from a passing nun, and another one
from a kid on a skateboard
of indeterminate gender, brought them
back into the café and sprawled them
on her lap, Yes, that's what I need!
she cried, but you're wrong, it's not
that I need more than one, I need
other people's skies –
the one I sold you was not my own,
I lied, I lost that years ago,
and have always made do with others.
What about you? I thought
and still am thinking. Can't remember
where I got my first sky or who from,
it blew away so long ago.

2.

The sun is out
the sky a little peevish
withdrawn,
stoking new waters,

Think of the sky as a veil
worn lightly on the hips of the earth.
Then it comes back,
the hard work of being nobody.

3.

And the sky has to put up with its below
even the peopleless landscape of the very rich.

4.

Vertumnus. Now who are you?

A cough in early winter. No.

A satin pillow on a hard wood bench.

Maybe. Morning sunlight flushing through
one petal of a crimson rose. Maybe.

The DNA of mitochondria

runs always through the mother —

there is no father in that world

just an irritant of cellular behavior,

a moment of excessive attention

and the trick is done. Maybe.

With his golden head he smiles.

turns away. The sun bores holes in the sky.

4 January 2006

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To name so many things and not know one –
I listen to the Prokofiev violin concerto and admire
vigor more than rigor. Just like me.
The scorching music enters my dream as I drowse.
Imageless dream scheme. A word snuggles down my veins
till something in me hears. A word like *Olmec*.
The ground before the ground.

4 January 2006