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ON THE DAY 13 AJPU

So the boys with the blowgun
run around today,
the lords of us and our little light,

the Twins. The thing with twins in
one is alive and one is dead
always. You can't tell them apart.
Sometimes they themselves don't know.
For a long time.

Then trees tell them.
Their shadows stumble.
Their hair gives off too much light.

We see them coming. We hide in the cornfield.
If there is no corn we try to close our eyes.

16 February 2006

= = = = =

He got into trouble when he forgot the days.
The days that were in them,
the boats in the harbor, every day has a sea in it,
a storm, a port, a lighthouse.
Then the days forgot him.
He was alone with himself in the crowded street.
He mumbled. So much forgetting!
On the street where he was born a boy asked
where he was from. He tried to answer
but the lighthouse kept blinding his mind.

16 February 2006

STARS

It's stars we need not stories. Or stories with stars in them that we need. Or stores, stores, not stories and not stars, stores open late with stones in them to keep us warm while we examine magazines that explain to us stories about the stars. Stories about stars, that's what we need, the store has everything, has black stones to keep us warm while we study the stars. Black milk of virgins they have in their machine that keeps us wakeful as we read. They have the leaf that knows how to forget. The man from Pakistan smiles and sells us lottery tickets and we will win, and with the money we will buy more bottles of the colored water, a plastic spoon to scrape ice off our new car, cupcakes to eat, as many as we want. There is food here, after all, every star has a story so every store has food but no one often eats. A store is a stone in the night, you find it by its lights, you let it be bright, it lets you in and you let it be around you. Nothing else is needed but what it needs.

16 February 2006

SAMARKAND

They built the sky in Samarkand
fitting those famous blue tiles together
till there was nothing left to see but light

and they built the ocean from Arabia
all its ancient fountains rinsed
dry to make the tides rise and roll

but where did they make the little man
who stood inside my ear and told me this
one morning while I tried to go on sleeping?

16 February 2006

BIVALVE

A valve is a door I remember. Latin *valva*, a door, panel of a door. It was in a book. A book is a beech tree I remember. Another book. A book is a bivalve too, two doors, front and back. But we usually sneak in the middle. Where the clam itself is waiting, all dressed up in words and pretending to mean.

17 February 2006

IMPOSTORS

So much of poetry is imposture. The most honest poet we know of pretended to talk familiarly with the Devil. Maybe one really does do that. But he also pretended to chat with the prophet Ezechiel, himself a dubious witness who claimed to have seen a flying saucer over the Babylon, a spaceship with eyes.

17 February 2006

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I know all I need to know
and keep it safe between your ears.

17 II 06 Olin

SUBMARINE

I go through the world like a submarine
passing quiet, quiet through enemy waters

hoping someday to torpedo an idea.

An idea that would explode like a chrysanthemum of fire
into the night sky then sink down
and think itself to sleep all around me.

17 February 2006 Olin

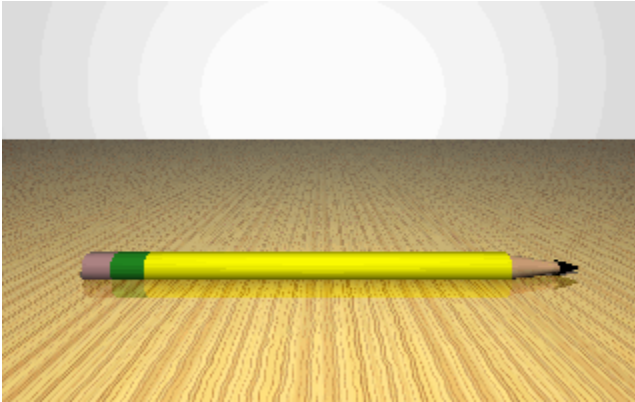
(after reading some Pessoa to a class)

= = = = =

I can afford to wait because of you.
Because of all you have waiting for me
alive in the triangle between
your eyes, my eyes, and the surface of the seen.

17 II 06 Olin

ESSAY ON WRITING



Erasure Bodily Contact Inscription

17 February 2006 Olin

= = = = =

The spill of news around Mr. Cheney. He tells what he saw. He is news. He is news who hardly was before because what he's really good at is being not noticed. He is news again. So an old man falls. So many young men fall far away and nearby and never ending war. Yet for Mr. C. there is so little death going on that he has to kill birds, a lot of birds. Somebody should investigate his pleasures, I'm too tired to. But that's what political analysts should really tell us about candidates – what turns them on. What are their spooky little pleasures, a desert littered with dead quail.

17 February 2006

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The look of the place when winter's almost gone
and comes again, new snow, the startled light
in the living room. The stranded amaryllis.

18 II 06

= = = = =

Suppose a nose.

Suppose a bone.

Suppose none.

“Something understood.”

= = = = =

Only the new myths matter
the one ones are still asleep
show heave of their old chests
under the blankets, sweaty
pillows, my face
flushed from their sleep.

The new ones stand up in dream
to vex and allure.
Sweater girls with one laptop
and on a big pile of sand
a woman you claim to be your sister.
Now which one of you
must be Gilgamesh. Go be the bride.

18 February 2006

= = = = =

If there were one
it would be a little bit like you,
beautiful, absent-minded,
not sure yet if it was
Pascal or Montaigne who said
what you almost remember,
a ditzy god who made it all
so beautiful then looked away.

18 February 2006

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It doesn't have to be a little story.

It is a gasp

you have to find the lung for

or just let it roll off

with the rest of the blue weather.

= = = = =

The delicate chemical balance called sanity.

The delicate chemical balance called genius.

And genius is more stable than sanity, just as a work of art or science is more enduring than its maker.

Then I think about Hölderlin as Scardanelli, and wonder. But there is genius and genius. Alvaro de Campo and Ricardo Reis...

TIEN AN MEN

Gate of harmony, gate of peace,
peace of the sort that heaven
– the sky – balances over a city night and day
unalterable.

Not subject
to disturbances, people will,
tanks, aspirations, reprisals, shrill
nationalities at all.

It has not yet
come down from the sky to hold us.

20 February 2006

= = = = =

Where was the beginning?

We wanted only the ending

only the flag unfurling over one more island.

Once a day the sun comes in this window

and then goes out again.

20 February 2006

= = = = =

Am I a child still waiting to grow up
or an old man waiting to die?
The feeling is the same. The former
grows into the latter. The rich
thick time still ropy in my hands.

20 II 06