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## DAYKEEPING

If you wanted to keep the track of the days  
you would need strange shoes  
you would need to walk on rabbit feet  
leaving deer tracks behind you  
you would have to march in place  
like stalks of August corn stalwart in the field  
and a Crow examining you.

You would have to hurry like the shadow of a helicopter  
trying to escape from the image its cameraman is broadcasting  
of the poor criminal landscape down below  
and, and you would have to crumble  
like the stucco wall of a ruined warehouse  
collapsing under heavy early spring snow under wind.

And above all you would have to speak  
Yiddish or a tree.

No new language knows the way.

Then you would get there at last  
with the glass in your hand still half full.

16 March 2006

## RAPTURE REMEMBERED

Of course it all. Happened again before.  
The wheel and the inkwell the ohm the nail  
and you made music of it that time, you made *ars*.

Every food is a chemical and some of them dement.  
Lettuce and shiitake and watch out for flies.  
White is too a color forgive them they know not what they see.

Unless you call a color only what happens  
to light in a prism really I mean it.  
Unless King David is on your case  
and he sings while you busy yourself in the harem

where the young wives show the old wives  
so many postcards from so many places  
not even God has seen so many  
picturesque villages with snow in their eyes.

16 March 2006

## THE INVISIBLE AMERICANS OUR HOPE

The invisible Americans  
waited in pine woods  
in hardwood forest orchards  
they had planted

a continent of fruit trees and deer.

They had gotten rid of horses and camels –  
horses lead to warfare, and they made peace.  
Camels lead to nomads  
and they wanted us to settle  
down a year or two in quiet  
and understand the light, the rock, the stream.

There is so much to understand about the light.

In those days the Day called *Quiej* came to mean Deer,  
large innocent herbivorous quadruped.

They had gotten rid of the horse  
and its army, gotten rid of pitched battles.

Now the only fighting was people getting  
mad at other people now and then,  
once in a while and not by policy  
the way we do, the way I also love you.

And then the whitish people came  
and wiped out most of the Visible Americans

and brought back the horse. O the horse  
is the root of it all, war's instrument,  
braying stallion, Custer and the cavalry.

Then the Day called *Quiej* began to mean horse again  
as it had thousands of years before the Invisible Americans  
had cleansed the land of war

and the little Visible Americans shriveled  
and got yellow and dusky and hid in the highlands, the desert, the swamp.  
And whitish men on their horses, in their Hummers  
came after them and come after them.

And all this while the Invisible Americans  
are watching, are biding their times, o so much time they have  
and we have so little, and the horse  
runs on grass, the Hummer runs on gas,  
soon they will take the grass and the oil away

then the Invisible Americans will make the land  
safe again for the Visible Americans  
who will come out of their trailers their condos they milpas  
and be nice to each other again  
most of the time and they will be  
one at a time to each other again  
just as I always am to you.

17 March 2006

## AFTER WANG WEI

Thank God the mountain's empty – nobody in sight  
but I do hear the sound of men's voices—

a voice in silence  
is like a shadow  
fallen on the grass

or as in the deep woods sometimes a ray of  
sunlight falls on bright green moss

or is it my own breath?

17 March 2006

empty mountain no see man  
but hear man voice sound  
reflection shadow enter deep woods  
bright green on moss falls

## DIAGNOSIS

*for J.W.*

Your falls, φοινός  
long trails tore tarsals  
and as for tendo  
far tearing. Genetic,  
*on dit.*

Maccabees  
in your garden  
harassing Philistine kudzu—  
do you have that, those?

Tumult of young politics  
Amharic customs  
—leave out cream—  
for the nice devils of the afterlude  
toy with your tingle.

Abrupt as a sailing ship  
but you say schooner.  
Sad as a magazine,

year after year we tremble in the waiting room.

18 March 2006



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Hark! It hopes!

But stone—

look “a pebble” in the eye

or study a hole an hour

without regarding what it’s a hole in –

then the mind goes away to its own place

and rests there open to the whole world

not trapped by you anymore

when you look at something else

a long while you let it go.

18 March 2006

## POWER OF ATTORNEY

Between testaments compose a codicil  
sell a building read a book.  
These are dangerous times, muchacha.  
The ravine runs through pinewoods even.  
Down there a trickle (through dead leaves  
on the far side where the hardwoods hang,  
dead needles down this from this)  
runs like a something I don't entirely  
remember, something that just tickles  
the back of the mind as if we suddenly  
recognized all at once but one by one  
that hey this thing all round us is  
air and we can actually breathe in.

18 March 2006

(from notes in Arlington 14 III 06)

## AND FINALLY

the unknown man  
opens the door and there is spring out there.  
The unknown man opens his pocket  
and throws some seed out there  
then the sheep begin to howl  
and the bees dance in their places  
humming over a pale rough tawny stone.  
Now bees feed on this rough stone  
and make honey for me from that  
the man says, this unknown man.  
Everything is ready for his hour,  
the hour at last of the unknown man.

19 March 2006

=====

Every line has to surprise  
it's like watching a road  
and seeing a man walking down it  
it can't always be the same man  
always has to be a new woman a new man  
it's like waiting for the new man.

19 March 2006

=====

Await the necessary, honey.  
A man on a dock in wet shoes.  
Talmud commentary. Somewhere  
there is what we call a footnote  
explaining this very moment.  
I look down from the mirror  
and think about you far away.  
How simple the body is we are.  
All beings are unique, most  
unique beings hide in sameness,  
the flock. But some unique beings  
are brave beings and dare to be  
obvious out here in the light.  
Of such as these are we. I look  
back at the mirror and see a man.  
The man is laughing at us.

19 March 2006

Feast of Saint Joseph

## AN EPISODE OF LATE ROMAN HISTORY

On a day that is *spyi*, a day that is Fire + Water  
a day not for important meetings.

What kind of day? But it is the  
day Six Tooth, *E* or *Eb*, day  
of the road too, day to go.

To go but not to meet,  
To meet and not to speak.  
To keep the calendar quiet  
as the lines in my palm,  
call Julia on the newfangled telephone  
and tell her to meet me under the Arch  
but tell no one. And pretend  
when we meet we have never met before.

20 March 2006

## THE PRACTICES

call it a religion  
the way a child falls off a swing  
a linden tree gets planted

Marrano weather  
to keep in your heart what won't fit in the mouth  
a ship small leaping on old seas

but this particular tulip died a hero's death  
among the imperial messengers only  
one willing to clasp the cold silver hand

cold for all its beauty  
or it could be politics too of a refined sort  
dusty old finery in her attic

who made you such a faithful companion  
milestone on the road to Compostela  
eel stew eaten in the company of a hooded man.

20 March 2006

## THE SINKING OF THE "TACONIC"

When in the coldest March we saw already  
a woodchuck killed on the road we knew  
there are two kinds of weather, two  
kinds of time. They hibernate, can't  
really be here to die. But dead  
he is as we flash by. Two kinds of time,  
over and under. Yet in between,  
where we sort of are, there is no time at all.

20 March 2006



## MOVIE

Caught in the mythology of his lust  
she spins from episode to episode.  
The Viennese eating house, the bus,  
the synagogue, the windowledge,  
the spilled communion wine,  
the hot tub deep in the woods.  
No place exists that is not  
beautifully spoiled by his touch.  
Their touch. Another language  
keeps beginning. 'Sex'  
comes from 'self' in 'exile,'  
the soul of one wandering in the other  
so that they have to see so many things  
and show each other everything they've seen  
before they let the lights come on again.

21 March 2006

=====

Turn my paltry wishes into prose:  
embed the episode in amberish detail.  
Wear it. Dangle round your dog's neck  
a little holy medal with an unknown saint,  
patron of forgotten information. Lost data.  
Dogs are born hungry for a name,  
that's all. The rest they can do themselves.  
Don't interfere. A star knows when to set.  
Et cetera. I told you and I tell you  
so much but how much sinks in  
and where and do I want it to and do  
I want to hurry in there with it  
to get lost in those sketchy scrub oak woods  
politeness makes us call our mind.

21 March 2006

*ars poetica*

*for Anja*

If I made the line longer  
it might one day reach the end of itself.

21 March 2006

## SUNDOWN

What was I thinking  
when I was thinking?  
What did the sun think  
as it sank into the mountain  
all that fierce fire  
and that hard dark stone  
making one soft kiss?

21 March 2006