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for Charlotte, on her birthday

How can I ever tell
I loved you so much
more when you brought
down from the attic

the old lined blue
manuscript translation
of the whole Aeneid
you did in high school,

how small I must be
that something so
wonderful could make
me love you more

even than the years
between have done
already, as if love
were itself the animal

and makes us grow
to accommodate its
snoozes and arousals
it makes us travel

upriver always
into the lyric dark
of a weird country
new after exile.

22 November 2006

THE ZODIAC

One to take the order
one to cook
one to plate the food
one to serve

one to hover at the diner's back
one to ask How like you this?
one to walk by and smile and smile
one to sit down uninvited and shmooze

one to clear the plates away and crumb the linen
one to bring the bill and set it down without a word
one to pick up the cash or credit card
one to bow you out and hold the door as you go out into the dark.

22 November 2006
Terrapin, Rhinebeck

= = = = =

Measure enough of the light
to take the picture of that perfect
darkness called the Visible World

the hills at night we came
over one by one to get home
home and turn the light on

the ordinary light and read
the ordinary mail always
a word lurking there

that's what home is a word
waiting for the soft darkling mind
to spit some light up,

a baby gagging on too much light.

23 November 2006

= = = = =

“Understanding
is not the same
as being right”
she said coming
into the room
holding a tray
of olives, things,
beginnings
of dinner, a word
before and after,
she said it
like a huge bell
fallen from a tower
huge clamor
of its tone all
evening dwindling
the sound still
not exactly heard but
being there
steady in the mind’s
ear, an understanding
after all, and still
not altogether right.

23 November 2006
Alligerville, *for Gret*

= = = = =

it came to me in dream
somehow the light
that isn't light

so anything I turn on
turns off something else

fifty years this same blind dream.

23 November 2006

= = = = =

Having lost
the current of the day
there is a stumbling
in me over pebbles
warm, unexpected,
the sun

I am a child
again wordless with morning.

24 November 2006

= = = = =

But I wanted other
things to say me

a word a hand
reach out
to say you
really are there

for me, the bad
habit of talking
in bed always

making certain
you are inside you
and every breath
explaining.

24 November 2006

= = = = =

How slow the community
woodland practices naiad noon
wet from cloudless sky
having passages of sheer bird
namelessly shadowing the small
terrain you dare before your eyes
to have this knowledge to have
any knowledge eyes of the word
ache in you to explain
the prestiges of daylight sooner
than the old gendarme on high
agent of a veiled potency
grudgingly allows even you
its best-born youngling or hand
of the morning lifted to greet
filial the astonishing light
against which only the sullen heretic
sequestered in the egoic chateau
of him even fitfully protests
and to what goal muchacha
you who from almost the beginning
pelvis'd him safe in your maybe?

24 November 2006

= = = = =

Short thing in no long say
powwow in the all night café
the years pass. Montezuma and I
ponder down the sidewalk
ogling this one or that one
rare at love's last hour to the street.
Hora novissima. End of some world
last judgment. This is the panoply
merely of your next dream
where all the sins of the day
are punished by baffling images
and randy bewilderments
loving and losing and worse
loving and getting and keeping.
Wake. That was hell. It is always
a nanosecond deep away.

25 November 2006
Boston

= = = = =

Whose hood is this over my head
and how do I know it's my head
if I can't see its face?

If I know myself from the inside
can I trust what I know?
Does it report a self that you
also could agree to see or see

automatically when you look
this way and say Yes, there
is my friend (the friend
that I've always called me).

25 November 2006
Boston

= = = = =

But why can't I be long?

Long poems are like atropine
dissolve the eye in watery discourse
and then all clear again
better than ever, a word in someone's lap
o so innocent let fall.

25 November 2006
Boston

= = = = =

So things

 have many learned
an abstract or a broke
jug tilt to catch
 what swarms in rain leaf
spider dry in all that wet
cause death's a dry one
nailed to the transom in iron
a cross of screwdrivers
rusty red in winter weather

o they come from all over
they get splinters from the wooden seats
it was a scream

 a polity
of having no police the blue
fell through the trees enough to say
there's sky tonight and sleep with me

all it ever wanted to be was more
and take me with it please or please
leave me here with what happens.

26 November 2006

CASTAWAYS

Nuthatch. Tree.

Book, benison.

Shadows

stilled

through the first clearing.

No number lyric, step,

step,

seen so quick

from the corner of the moon a

wink blue lawn a step

and here the woodpecker

bangs the wall,

morning dentist, wake to scowl

of sunshine.

It was a morning

where everything was before,

how to catch up,

the sunlight racing across the grass

amazingly green for almost December,

qualifiers everywhere

clustered

around an almost unsayable remark

may be made

imprudent

to a friend.

Or sent to read

so that *littera manet*, the trash

of what you meant

scattered by the wind of her reading

covers the cement pavement of the huge schoolyard

where all memory starts,

now unrowdy with Sunday,

she'll never forgive

such gentleness the sky

delicacy of metonym

veiling desire,

and desire itself

nothing but a veil

for letting the mind-heart linger

in focus,

 let the whole self
be one fixed image
 stuck to the wall,
world, be-thing itself, certainty,
fixed in its target
the arrow eternally quivers
and this vibration is permanent,
is the much sought-for other,
happening to the desirer

whence it comes
that the eyes close in orgasm
having just for one moment seen enough

enough for what?

 The crow
still calls from the ruined barn
and even closer the sun
still laughs at the sluggish amorist
doddering away from the pillowslips of Carthage,
don't be so effing diffident, she'd said,
but she was dead, long ago,
she and her images, mid-heart her
understanding,
 her own hand, beyond.

26 November 2006

HOUR CIRCLES

form, the feet deciding, distance
from your house
in an hour
you can go,
and then from there, the circles form

NATIVITY & WHAT IS BORN

Too much light.
The dark we need, the dark
left in Mary's womb,

the after the afterbirth
the dark inside meat
the honey of her silence

and now to silence
all the bright weapons
in desert glare

will the dark child finally come?

26/27 November 2006

for A Book of Airs

Man weird newer eye in male
be born in, man leaped newer iron
mail in the veldt. Weird is fate.

Eye sees other. Born be dead to some
before. The veldt is everything
that kisses space. There, there, blend

in sunlight dust of their going, beast,
mind? Manned in greed station,
boast prowess of dumb chief? Hark!

No oak here, appeal for moss.
Look no leaf. Man leaps newer
eye to sin what's felt. Man weird,

new. Veldt stretched, blue hill clutch.
New eye in all weird he's born in.

27 November 2006
(after Lortzing)

= = = = =

Edgemere it didn't
or know the other
side of this stream
you could hop over it
when you were young
and now still on one
of those days you call
good, not Friday,
not today, but sometime
soon as a girl or a smile
or the elm leaves
scuttling in wind over
the face of the water
you dream and dream.

27 November 2006

CHORUS

Around it a measure.

A turn into the ash stream, quiet
burn through wet trees. Prokofiev.

Names stay with us
somehow. Count the names. Gloritude.
Maniformed. Help.

The gull
remembers the sky with hands,
floats through reflection, dines
on those weird silver shadows
that live beneath.

The uncorroded
evidence momentarily alive.
Eve in Eden. Berlioz.

I am trying to be the same name—
a lion chased us through the rooms
then down the street, we hid in a little
car with plastic windows then
we chased him.

Before the library
was I am. The stone lion
already covered with snow.
How quick the tawny lion pranced
kept close to the buildings
slipped in and out of time. Snow.

City. Schumann. Iron bridge
green river. Car. Car. I have
waited so long in thee
to become another.

So much music
must have taught me something,
meant me going, away, away,
a sail on the lake, unseasonable, risk.

Music is always a danger.
Thinking up the long street
all the way to the mist it hides in,
even the weather conceals itself from us,

that lion. Mist.

I love this picture,
it is always long ago when it is snowing,

maybe time itself is made of weather,
what else could it be, where could they go
with all that snow except the measure-mind
that knows how to tell time.

Stow it in the river. It all becomes.
We stole the car we hid in and drove slow
parsing the lion as it padded
yellow through the stone grid of Chicago.
Still Schumann.

A street named for the dead.
And all the windows are opaque.

Words spill out of my mouth.
I follow them, drive faster, the lion leaps.
We all turn into a building,
what else does the mind know
but structure? Room after room of it
forever. Made of boundaries. Bound.

We are a thing with rooms in it
and walls and doors.
Doors are the things that wake.

27 November 2006