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A SUITE OF PIECES ON CERTAIN MUSIC

(1)

All those afters
waiting for a single before.

November Woods by Arnold Bax
oykh mir an Irisher

we all are

an exile. Exiled always
from the place you stand.
“The woods were green...” and we ran away.
The woods are sere,
we still are there,
there is a mountain
on the other side of the city
no one has clomb
he said and we wondered
how he knew so well
what no one did.

The music's not as strange as these woods are,
my house is in there
found, and found again,
a license to be here

and a bird flying ober.
Water the amaryllis, it's November
again and almost gone,
the music
is too thin, the air is thick
in November woods, o I see, he's
listening to the light
alone, not to its veils, its intricate
apparencies,

between trees
I can name and all the others,
a thickening of the light
I try to hear.

Warm for the season I have been cold so long.

Does an exaltation
have to do with its name
or somehow live therein?

So when the Pope looks up in Saint Sophie
does he think *Justinian*?
Anthemius?

 who built a stone flower
a lotus of the lower air
open down to us to take us in?

The splendor thick in trees
air charged deep
weighted with task: remember the light.
I stand in leaf-fall of a hundred years
the open secret, the undisturbed
potency of what is present to itself
completely,
 hence to me
whoever I turn out to be in this music,
the arrest. The crest. A river crawling past.

(28 November 2006)

(2)

This is the day the dead
go on to heaven from
where they have been waiting
all month long or all year long
depending on the intensity of their waiting.

They go to the place where they are going to be dead
a long or little time. This is called **The Happy Forest**,
it lasts ten minutes
of time
but what is time
among the orchestra
of sheer going on,

 then they are reborn
 in their chosen capsules
 —four kinds of being born—
and here they are, again it may be,
every one of them (of us I really mean)
strolls along, flaneurs of inner cities,
smiling at the back of our minds
at our memories of this same place.

The from place.

 The happy time
(or happy kind) just below the skin
you hardly ever get to know
these days, cities, chores, mines, oilrigs,

the games our lives depend on playing
and why not, anything for a laugh,
anything that smells even a little bit like love
is good,

 even a little true. Like you
(if I may be impertinent) (yes but not personal)
here the main theme comes in,
far away strings not too high pitched,
like the groan of an old apple tree in autumn wind
under the weight of everything it means to say.
Like you that way too, silently articulate.

Close enough to the finish line
you can see the deer stand around the meadow,
the picnickers folding up their linen,
the revolutionaries in old Chevrolets
nervously sticking to the speed limit,
it's going to rain. Or it's not.
We're nervous too but don't know about what.

Could it be that this is how it starts?
The ending, I mean, the impertinent
impenitent who takes you, even you,
by the hand and walks you to the door,
coaxing you,
a hand soft on your waist, ever amorous,
ever saying goodbye?

Our suspicions
are confused. A taste of sunlight
on your lip.

It tastes like a flute.
It sounds like a bird
hitting the window, falling, getting up, shaking itself, flying away.

(29 November 2006)

IN IRELAND THEY TEACH YOU TO PLOW THE CLOUDS

1.

Teachers teach
you to do
what they can't

in Ireland though
it's different
neither teacher

nor learner can.

2.

I want to tell everyone the truth.
But the cloud is only apparent.
Yet it is our breath restored to heaven

funny old word for sky. The sky
I mean. We give back
what we took in. How

to plow what only you can see.

3.

Once on a cold day
the furnace failed, it started
to snow inside my living room

little flakes forming at the ceiling
and sifting down.
The proportion. The relationship.

Heaven is anywhere.
You are the plow. I mean me,
I am the one.

4.

It means too much
to me to tell
you what I mean.

5.

In jets you get
a sensation
you are the nose

of something big and hard
snouting through the clouds.

When the furrow is clear
you see the earth down there
farms fields factories folk

all the lovely phony actual.
Plowing the clouds is to find earth again.

29 November 2006
(sketches from a prompt I gave)

(3)

I wonder if Fand in **The Garden of Fand** means *fionn*
like white or pale,

color of barley, color of autumn grasses
ornamental, waving beside the dry fountain at Blithewood,
ghost-white waftures, breezy mild monsters, dream, dream,

color of one time your hair, the hue called *fair*,
it sounds easy, pretty, as pale or bright affairs
ease us with their soft glare,

o god the light
coming through your hair.

Some times (all times)
too much for me, the separation,
how much you mean,
how much you do
to the light coming through.

It comes
mysterious now, the keys of things
jingling from the soft belt round her waist,
youthful chatelaine of this place,

we hear her coming through the woods
or up the hall, the keys jangling
for all the doors,

everything has a door,
she knows which one fits each,

it is a storm coming out of the west.

We always hear too much.

It is a kind of run we drink,
excessive stimulation of the amygdala,
I mean identity,

excessive stimulation of desire.

But the keys keep sounding, the doors fly open one by one,
soundlessly they close,

open, we see the weather
hurrying in,

on all those leaves, yes, storm.

But it falls away in her hands,
she carries out everything she brought in,
that is what a garden is: colors,
stone walls around something you remember,
want to remember,

un colore non dura says Ungaretti,
we can almost guess what that must mean,
In or out of the garden.

But the beautiful walls!

(29 November 2006)

(4)

So mild today, not warm, *mild*
virgin it used to say on cigarettes
in Germany, just as on the old Gauloises
yellow it used to say *goût Maryland*.
Like Camels sort of but without
the implication.

Who *is* that it
who used to say? Who said so much
that nobody says now?

So mild today,
time so mild and virgin
today, the pale
empty trees, their cotillion,
nude debutantes,
the light's debut,
always this time of year, but so mild today
when everything is almost known,
kept, thrown away,
so mild,

Summer Music Ken sent me
waiting for the Hartley train to start,
all the stations of my ascent
to this particular northeast moment home.
Trumpet call. Brass sounds like glass.

Now who is this Abraham Morris I find
among my ancestors, the earliest on earth,
father of William, William my great-great-great
grandfather,
so mild today, could I be
Abraham also?

Have I not like him
cried out Hinne-ni to any passing music,
here I am Lord, listening,
be not enchanted by my listening but flee,
may I, soundlings, vague among your proper woods?

(30 Nov.2006)