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Bard

==========

Wake among rivers of rain
waking to rain
in a day of thaw.

Thaw rain day.
Wake. History
fits everyone.

You can be me.
Already you are.
Already my breath
gets lost in your chest,
you spit my words out.

We
is a contaminated
commodity blessedly.
We are aristocrats
pretending to be
milkmaids at Versailles.
We pretend to be each other.
No cow, no milk, no Trianon.
We are not even ourselves.
Blessedly the rain
has washed all that away.

14 January 2005

==========

Sometimes my heart
is cold
a field of snow
but there are fox prints
delicate, full of shadow,
leading to you.

14 January 2005

==========

If all the houses
once occupied by great poets
became museums honoring those dead poets

the population of the earth
would have to live elsewhere.
We are all dreamers.

14 January 2005

==========

A ribbon the color of a rose
you wanted,
all right, here it is

tie it softly
in your hair the color of your hair
and look at me

with eyes just exactly the color of your eyes
and this will be thanks enough
the color of sanctifying grace.

14 January 2005

==========

If I weren't so nice
I would tell the bus driver where to go,
and tell the schoolgirl
who thinks she's entitled to a higher grade
what her work is really worth.
But I am nice,
nice the way winter I,
inevitably yielding to spring,
nice and meager and stupid and clean
like bus loads of old people
waiting in Stockbridge, Massachusetts
for the Norman Rockwell Museum to open.
Whatever you do, driver, don't go there.

14 January 2005

==========

Keep everything ten feet away.
Don't look at the sky.
Close the book.
And for five minutes forget the pagan gods
already. Just pay attention to this.
Now tell me what it is.

14 January 2005

==========

It's late enough for me to be somebody else
when I go out to check the weather
(as if I could do anything about it)
my shadow on the snow looks like a man wearing a fez

a gratifying illusion or impersonation
though I'm not sure what part of the image
is the illusion
and I'm not too sure about the weather

maybe I can do something about it
take off my hat and let the stars like Paracelsus
work their way down into my head
since our brains and nearby souls are

nothing other than emulsions primed for them
to scribble their luminous mysteries on
until we think we understand something
and maybe I do maybe that shadow is really someone else

my angel my carpenter my instrument my god.

14 January 2005

==========

Buying a peccary
by mail. Come to me
my javelina,
pig thou art not

thou art something else.
Everything is illegible,
of no known origin,
splashes through the shallows.

Everything insists
on being a kind of river.
Washes over my feet.
Knocks at the door.

Mailman, mailman
bring me an animal,
my door is open,
I am singing.

15 January 2005

BEFORE THE MOUNTAINS CAME TO TOWN

(variations on some old words, substrate words, Basque now, from the long before)

All afternoon
the wind was near
asking for our custom:
Come buy my dream,
dear friend

*

When my friend
awakens from a little nap
she likes to take
in the quiet time
between the afternoon trains
it is my custom
to sit down near her and ask
Did you dream?
I dreamed something
she says, but I think it was only the wind.

*

Dreaming the wind,
a close friend is near.

Afternoon.
Ask me anything you want

*

And always the other poems, other vistas: the permutations I dont see, or don't understand. The obstruction of the lyrical. The obstruction of making sense. That is why I keep going on writing, forever, I guess, trying to get all of what is offered, trying to get it all down.

15 January 2005

==========

Dear Diary I have told you this
so you could tell everybody later
when my back is turned.
Every poem is confessional –
but only the avowal counts,
the sins are trivial.
But the apologetic murmur after
sounds like Handel's ten minute chorus of Amen.
I fill the church with intimacies.
I roar the tender moment touched me.

15 January 2005

==========

I'm not sure, am I one or many,
I'll look it up, later, in Bruno.
Meantime I'll remember that
girl in Bratislava, she could tell me
a thing or two,
we walk on two legs
she said, we need two of anything,
similar but a little different
to get anywhere, Hegel and Kierkegaard,
youa nd me, to get there
but the only thing that counts is between them.

15 January 2005

==========

Fighting shy
of what tells me.
Resisting
is also a kind of negative
capability,

dancing with the poem
not always letting it
say what it wants to say,

waits to say,
it's a good dancer,
better than I am,
waits me out,
I say it, I resist

as long as I can
then let it speak,
say the thing
I don't myself believe

the thing that spoke me
into the world
needs comfort and praise.

15 January 2005

THREE THINGS THAT MAKE ME HAPPY

Magnifying
glasses, magnets,
wooden spoons.

THREE THINGS RICH PEOPLE DON'T KNOW

How much a quart of milk costs,
how generic cigarettes taste,
how cheap facial tissues are hard to get out of the box.

15.I.05

==========

Late late and I hoped you
mirror on the ceiling
so I could remember
what I wanted heaven to look like

when I got there
when I get there Comus
on one side Bruno on the other
there is no one more conservative than Hell

the beautiful Lucifer takes tea at Claridge's
beautifully. Meantime
nothing remembers me. Secretly
I am as crazy as Artaud,

sane as Blake, great
but not very good.
They said "Go fly a kite" and I did,
I still do, a thin arrangement of the sky,

dispositif de papier et d'encre
a flimsy paper thing in the heavens
with a thick heavy ugly
string hanging down to earth.

15 January 2005

==========

In the final years of the next century
when lunch gets delivered by pure thought
and sexual shenanigans are licit only on Friday
I will come to you again disguised as a skier
skimming the endless snows of Topanga
and breeding violets in my small den.
Because flowers will be in again.
Some days I come trudging through blizzards
carrying my cat, I'll kick at your doorflap
and you'll whistle me in, we'll linger for hours
admiring the shadows from your newest fire.
Maybe it's enough to know all this today
so we don't get too frightened or try to learn
too many weird languages, English is crooked enough.

16 January 2005

==========

Spoilsport philosopher, pack your bags.
We're off to Vegas with the dawn wind
to see what people really want to do with time.
I still don't think it will be vile as we think,
I have a weird feeling I'll like everything I see
even the sexagenarian showgirls, the polyester
philanderers, glum children with iPods and beer.
If we get scared we can hide in the library
pretending to read books about aging or pets.
We can analyze everything, react, analyze
our reactions and react to that. And the beauty
part is that nobody knows we're here.

16 January 2005

==========

In all these years
I have been
nowhere but this road

walking on it
feels like sitting still
like resting under a tree
like reading a book
like making love
like standing in a bar with friends

walking on it
is gentle, is as soft
as standing still
as Romeo and Juliet,
walking on it is like talking
but most of all like sleeping

walking on this road is sleeping
together till we get there

the nameless destination.

16 January 2005

==========

your body I am all about you
Kriemhild's revenge the old story
the hero misunderstood all the way to death
how I misspeak myself
because he fell asleep to his own identity
along the way. I am safe.
I have no identity to lose.

16 January 2005

==========

But could I listen?
Can I begin in the middle of things,
in the middle of what you were saying?

I didn't catch the beginning,
you have been talking forever,
I was absent at my grandmother's wedding
I forgot to dry your feet when you stepped ashore

we love each other another
these little oversights pass unrebuked
I wait to hear you
I want to listen to the very end.
And there will be no end.

16 January 2005