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ELEVEN BIRD

1.

Clear morning
sun on snow
thaw sparkle

everything clear
only over the stream
a street of mist

rising.

2.

Sometimes they walk on the sky.
Who am I then
lost in the underbrush of looking up?

3.

The way things meet their shadow
when they fall in sunlight
fascinates me. As if everything
is alive. When we fall
in sunlight something rises.
Whatever rises is one too.
So many and so few.

4.

A shadow is a sidekick in Hebrew,
that's why they come down from the sky,
they're lonely up there without their shadows.
Go down, Moses, go down to find your own.

5.

Now every wet is walking up.
To go back home to the sky –

every operation of the atmosphere
disposes us to follow. The body

mostly water chemists say
arises. Arise, the poet said

but who listens? Most of us
are already mostly gone.

6.

Mars mist, a red feather.

But color is behavior
and so are they. Now

honking cries overhead of me
some bound for the river

which these days has patches
of open water they must

be smoking too like wet skin.

7.

My red hair looks black in the picture,
my green eyes look black
like something seen against the sky
barely moving. What could
I have been seeing?

Who would dare
go up there and stay,
stripped of all color,
a shadow without a body to it?
I'm still here but all the colors are gone.

8.

Shadow hugs the little hill –
the sun is high enough now to change the trees.
Kiss Me the snow says,
Hug Me says every tree.
So many instructions everywhere—
nothing better to do
than follow all of them and see.

15 February 2005

=====

Horn call in the sky
like a pack of hunting dogs
yelping overhead. Not dogs.
To the river.

15 II 05

AVA LOOP

to the video of Ava Warbrick

We pray to what we see.

I am myself the other one
who moves when I move.
I lick my sword and do.

Seagull. Red skirt.
The skin is a kind of weather.

Make-up. A body coated
with the oil of seeing it.

2.
There are always two of you.
Martial arts. Pout. Marital arts.
Two, of you. From one
be two. Be red. Pout.
Red not like Russia like a mouth.
Kiss the vanishing distance.
I am this other person you are.

3.
A mouth because. Be calm,
her legs hold the earth in place

nothing bad is going to happen here,
she thinks too hard to kill.

Then with her staff she knights the air,
then with her stick she stirs the light.

She twirls the staff and then she twirls.
Princess of Wands in some old Tarot—

you need her images moving by your sleep.

4.

When you shake your head
my hat flies off.

When you lift your knee
all thought deserts me,

I turn red. Then you move
the staff in the great slow arc

that means The End.
Then you go on.

15 February 2005

=====
Some of it is close to me
some far. Sun on yellow rose,
instances of dust.

Things
that a morning does.

Out there the snow lies glazed with light,
a woman getting ready for her punishment,

it is how we think about these things
that works, or doesn't work for us.

It is the thinking. All the stibium
and all the roses, all the quick
fluids surging in their little jars,

the sun gazing down into its athanor of us,
we cook slow and come to be.

Alchemy of trifles, I love you so.

16 February 2005

PERNICETY

Why do I think that?
Because all I care about is how.

Things come to mind.
And more than that,
how peace settles out of war,
an alien precipitate that nurtures us.

We poor extraterrestrials marooned down here—
don't you know you are one?
You couldn't be reading this if you weren't.

And how could this planet seem so beautiful
if we weren't strangers,
tourists wandering outside the bombed hotel?

16 February 2005

=====

The salmon wanderers
by the upstream side
spell Edinburgh stone
spilt on Bergen Street
the prim aggressiveness
of winter rain

 faces
hid beneath umbrellas
any

 one of them
might be my mother
hurrying towards me
to start the whole thing
again, the Pontiac
the trolley car, the wool.

Grey wet wool, the paper
in my hand, a pencil
trying to write music
on it, a sonata, what
is a sonata, something
sounded, written down,
a toccata something touched.

I'm back there again.
Time and distance unavailing,

one is always where one is.
The place became me,
Eve might have said,

and I took it in.

Bite by bite,
note by note until
the paper had been scribbled full.

Back there, there is no time.
It is raining, a little boy
dry and cold in the car.
His mother coming from the doctor,
his father nowhere to be found.
It is raining. The other verb
like that is waiting. It is waiting.

The paper, kept ready
stuffed in the glove compartment,
pronounced glug-compartment
in that city, that day,
folded and refolded, ledger lines
half rubbed away, the notes
smudged but legible, unneat.

Signs signifying sounds
so that when the day itself
is folded away the music lasts.
Imagine the piano. The rain.
The sound of a horn. Calling.

17 February 2005

Poem beginning with 3 lines from cris cheek's 'stranger'

*Drove along glittering – lines With overlapping –
leaves – Only footprints. And hid there.
Called 'there' home. On a bed of soft
specifications – I knew Mahler
spouting transcendental trumpet cries.
But John Burks Gillespie – died in '93
once I hung around a North Beach boîte
staircase leading – down to hear*

no leaves – no palimpsest of
sound just Al-Kahbyr's baritone
and the long lean – loop of
Something Else. That was my home
that something – else in the ear
with big fat cheeks – a bellows
pouring out a Siegfried's worth of –
Nature Boy – when young

we dream of everything and everything dreams right back
comes – and we are thick – with it. And you
I haven't mentioned you before, the one
whose bed it actually is – spirit
clambering up the steps of matter – to be here
with me when I am nobody.
Nobody home. Call me on the phone.
Make me answer.

17 February 2005
(class exercise)
(hearing in mind the DVD of *A Night in Chicago*)

IONIZATION

The ionic pattern of the metal
sleeps in my wrist all night and heals.
Sunshine vast over Greek islands,
coast of Anatolia, shallow, far.
So pale. Nothing can get through
unchanged. This is Vienna,
the Turks already at the city wall,
sly courtesans slip into the city
murmuring poems by Yunus Emre
into the drowsy post-orgasmic ears
of their temporary swains. Gold
on one hand, copper on the other.
Bracelets for men and women, razors
bright enough to see your cheeks in
while shaving with another.
Some call it love, this is Prague,
the Emperor Rudolf turns
into a yellow flower when he sleeps.
Two girls are sent to prison when
they are found in an empty house alone
– no crime committed. This is dream.
The lyrical antagonism of oil and water

every sous-chef seeks to palliate
still sings on the tongue. Heat
brings opposites together. Molecular
maneuvers beyond the walls.
Turks have to sleep too, they dream
of pale Albanians who dream of
Viennese who dream they are flowers
and each morning another emperor
comes by and chooses only one
and that one lingers on his writing table
red fading through the afternoon
while chemists argue. The emperor studies
trying to learn each day a new language
of all those spoken in his realm. Today
Slovenian. Men succumb to alcohol
he hears when mercury flies away
too soon from sulfur. Music leaches salt,
waltzers sink unnerved to the parquet.
This is later. All the flowers of hypothesis
lose their hydrogen oxide and turn
into books. But such books! Operas
are spin-offs from them, and ballets,
and armies march across the Polish border
century after century. I am the first

victim usually, an ramshackle hamlet
by a smelly tanner's brook, I sell coffee,
the Jews all dream of other Jews,
the priest doesn't dream at all. This is now.
The orchestra packs up its difficult trombones
and makes its way home. Dawn is as they say
breaking, but what was it when it was whole?
I can wake now. The worst is over.
Deep inside my bone the gold sleeps too.
Somehow that proves I must be Turkish
not Jewish after all – can you forgive me,
soft Albanian friend? Logic laughs at love
and we laugh back. The flowers wilt
though light is everywhere I look.
What is missing? What does water do?

18 February 2005

FOR TEILHARD

Having everything and needing more –
that is the meaning of chemistry.

A book I read said Solomon
enclosed the Queen of Sheba in a flask
of Syrian glass. Another book said she
did that to Solomon. Who to believe?

A dream is full of lies our life makes true.
That seems obvious once you mention it.
Try to capture lost voices with a telephone,
watch the evidence of molecules
in Brownian movement. What kind of love
could dance that way
always ascending? Believe the glass.

18 February 2005

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And there the sorrow is,
to wake up before the world.

18 II 05

THE SEX LIFE OF SANTA CLAUS

It's really hard to tell him from Don Juan.

He sneaks into every house by night
and always leaves something behind.

His famous chimney entrance
(he needs no chimney) is a metaphor
transparently for coming from the top,
coming unexpectedly, making use
of a part of your house, using a part
of you and your house and your life
you don't know how to use. Yes, you.

He comes for you. As with the famous
Spanish so-called nobleman
his appetites turn into your history.

All year long you dream about this night
when he makes his way down into your house
—you leave little things out for him, cookies,
eggnog, or you tack up on the hearth
a little piece of innocent lingerie.

Who knows what he has to endure,
austerities of the north, the flat country
with no latitude, no wind and not much snow,

nothing to but orchestrate over and over
in his mind this night of nights, imagining
with all the energies of the magnetic pole
(where he really lives), dreaming of you.
Just like you, dreaming of the night,
fantasizing at last the adequate arrival.
Then he comes and goes. You wake at dawn
full of excited expectation but he's gone
already, he is always gone, hoofprints
on the roof but you find his real traces,
in front of the fireplace or under the tree
or on your lap already unwrapping,
something altogether new, something
you never till this moment knew
you so desperately wanted.

19 February 2005

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Every time I look in the mirror
I'm saying good bye.

I'm not dumb, I can count the years.
But the smile is the same,

the sly happy intelligent slightly coarse
ascetic glutton that looks back at me,

he's not saying good bye, not yet,
not with all the silver world around him,

around me, behind me, light
rushing towards me through a world of windows

and always new languages to learn
and old hands handing me new cups.

19 February 2005