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## marE2005

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***Even when music speaks, it still does not speak to us.***

– Rilke, 1914 (*writing to Magda von Hattingberg*)

1.

I hate saying no. Your name  
is Tone, or Town, or Tune.  
What does it mean that I said  
no to tone or tune? In the town  
music will not speak to me.

2.

All I want to do is listen  
because it's the way we speak,  
those of us who are children  
of a voice, born  
from something we heard.

3.

*Bat Qol*, they say, Daughter of a Voice  
or the voice, we hear  
what Rilke listened to.  
How he hated Germans,  
with all their music they would never listen.

4.

*Bat qol*, the voice's daughter,  
muse or meaning. A poet  
listens to the obscure  
prompting of a word. Overheard.  
Listen to the blackboard  
singing under the ridiculous chalk.  
But the daughter of the voice  
keeps speaking, the girls  
hurrying the season saunter by outside.

5.

But music has no outside.

Or is all outside. *God is a shout  
in the street*, said Joyce, refusing  
to listen. Or only listening.

6.

But that's not what the man meant  
writing to his friend. Sometimes  
we fail the listening,

                                or we are too busy listening  
to hear. That is the problem.

The fear that makes the fox's ears prick up.

The fear that silences the voiceless word  
losing it in the thick interpretations,  
wind stirring in your hair.

22 March 2005

*(Class exercise,  
apologizing to Taun Toay for not holding class outside)*

=====

Sometimes even a bishop tells the truth  
there is a crow on the lawn why lie about it

well he's not there right now but I saw him before  
how do you know he's a he? who isn't?

we all are Xs and Ys nobody is pure girl  
*yeled* a boy *yalda* another kind of boy

so it's just where you put the vowel  
it stays in my mouth all juicy and hot

breath is a kind of manifesto  
but what is she saying in his words

why are we so fucked up all we need  
is a night off every few minutes

then the delicate persimmons come again  
like a sleeper's eyes finally beginning to dream.

23 March 2005

## YEARS

Every waiting is an *hour*.  
Every idea is a *day*.

“What are years,” she said without asking.

Different answers offered:

- rivers. –sheep browsing over the crest of a hill.
- starling flock in March arriving.
- the damned in hell remembering autumn birch trees.
- ill-paid translators accompanying Central Asian potentates.

That comes closest. Years  
are translations of a lost original. Oh.

But the potentates are really here,  
you can smell the delicate garlic in their breath,  
the mare’s milk yogurt,  
you can reach out and touch their bristly chins  
yet still not understand a word they’re saying.

The translators are on strike  
forever. The sun is shining in the rain.

Those are years.

23 March 2005

## SOUHAITS

Hold the wall up  
with a wish.  
Let the person of the beloved  
sink into you  
becoming your person.  
Now there is no difference.  
The banks go crazy,  
snow falls in spring,  
black turns brown, gold  
changes into blackberries.  
Geography lesson.  
There is a castle  
where all this is true.  
It is called the Chateau You  
and lives in the harbor  
of an aching ancient city  
with a fat tower over it  
topped by a golden image of  
a God nobody knows.  
And when nobody remembers  
then we are together  
just like a glass of water.  
Or (forgive me) the sea.

23 March 2005

## TUDOR

The title of a book I wrote  
according to this dream.  
In a blurb I wrote for Paul Muldoon  
I am identified as the author  
of *Tudor*, nothing more.

Wrong title? Wrong me?  
Waking, I understood that publishers  
only see the future,  
are all about the future so *Tudor*  
is a book I have to write.

Starting right now,  
starting with Wyatt and Raleigh,  
starting with you.

24 March 2005

## **CAFETERIA**

Instead of standing there at the counter waiting for the guy to make your bacon and eggs why don't we have a new kind of employee in the restaurant who will wait there for you so you can go and sit down at the nice table and he will bring you your breakfast when it's ready and since he does your waiting for you we'll call him a waiter doesn't that sound like a good idea and besides it'll give somebody a job.

24 March 2005



## **AFFLICTED WITH LUCIDITY**

he disposed some ink around the page,  
loops and lines, loops and lines.

Then the piano began, with the pedal  
held too long so everything roared

like starting an old car in the garage.  
Music, we call this, makes the words  
go down easy and stay put inside,

rumble rumble, loops and lines,  
honeybuns, scarecrow in the cornfield

the wind does our dancing for us  
the snow falls in clumps from branches

you call that a piano? I think the crows have won.

25 March 2005

## SHUT-INS

Peter, do you remember shut-ins?  
The announcer used to speak of them  
voices tinged with condescension  
pity and distance: *and for all*  
*the shut-ins at home*, they'd say,  
where else would they be,  
Grant's Tomb, Rockefeller Center,  
pie-faced little boys under sweaty  
counterpanes, listening to the same  
radio shows we did, same adventures  
visualized from the heavy handed cues,  
clues, the actors gave us, sound effects,  
the shut-ins were there with us,  
pirates and detectives and land of the lost.  
Embarrassing! to meet them there,  
their empty eyes and sallow skin,  
withered limbs, strange pock marks,  
rashes, flushes, impetigo, vertigo—  
and they longed to shoot and get shot  
like the rest of us, sailors, shipwrecks,  
cowboys, Indian scouts, get the girl,  
get the boy, come home with diamonds.  
But they were home already and always.  
Saint Mandrake the Magician, pray for them!  
Where are all the shut-ins now?  
Did television cure them, send them  
out in the streets now, limping around?  
Is that why there are so many cars?

24 March 2005  
for Peter Lamborn Wilson  
**End of Notebook 274**

*Today is the day Christ washed the feet of his friends.*

I am your friend, come let me kneel  
at your knees and wash off the dust  
and distances of all your journeys

that brought you to me. Then you  
can wash my feet, each of us  
can play the game called Christ

loving and leaving, loving, leaving,  
today is the day to wash the feet of the sky.  
Look up the long blue dress of it

and see where he has vanished now,  
Egypt up there and he's on the road again  
dusty and difficult to understand.

All they taught us was Be Christ.  
We have to learn for ourselves  
what it means to be a friend.

24 March 2005  
(class exercise)

## TWO FOR HOLY THURSDAY

So many things to mean  
so much me to mean it.

This is the 'body of death' Paul  
asked who would free him from.

\*

The miracle was not turning  
water into wine.

The real  
miracle was turning  
clear water into dirty water  
by washing his friends' feet.

24 March 2005

## ANNUNCIATION / GOOD FRIDAY

In such a year  
the date of a man's  
conception and the day of his death  
is the same day

In the chanceries of Europe they write down  
*puella ignota impregnata est*  
and then they write in their curious alphabets  
meant to keep ordinary people from understanding  
*aliquis Judeus mortus est*  
*extra Jerusalem* and close their books

For history wants none of us  
we who leave no footprints on the marble stairs  
only shadows on strangers

and then somehow the strangers go  
back to their own country  
carrying their random memories  
a pretty girl they saw in Avignon  
a Serbian restaurant in Vienna  
some Jew that they saw dying on a hill

and here and there a pregnant teenaged exile  
waddles towards the minute of her glory

karma, calendars, clocks the waves  
lapping, washing our feet when he is gone

master, mother, monster,  
strange custom of your absence

a centaur sobbing in the woods.

25 March 2005

=====

If I sat on a throne  
wearing my medals and crown  
I would scratch graffiti in  
the golden chair arms  
with my diamond ring—

it's not enough to rule.  
You must leave the very power  
by which you rule  
shaped by your wielding it,

you have to add  
new letters to the alphabet  
new days to the week  
a new color between seven and eight

change the base, change the base of all.  
The world must never be the same  
when you get finished breathing.

25 March 2005

## MEDITATION

Let the body do it  
while the mind  
sleeps in the lap of the mind.

**26 III 05**

=====

Begin the intimate again  
or be a farmer  
whose fields of tomatoes  
humiliate the Jersey sun

*being brighter than what illumines you*

honey, give more than you get.

This is Faust's acre,  
once-famous Source of Radio Emission,

this is up there,  
in you, high and tight,

all the scatter  
shields us  
from what we know

the aftermath,  
the crippled gymnast hobbling home.

Is she here yet, near yet,  
does she have a huge  
public voice to guide us  
into and our of her traditions,

our solemn traffic with the moon,  
trumps of lost systems,  
zodiacs of scattered nurses  
each one with a different kind of milk?

**26 March 2005**



=====

How loud is the poem?  
Who is it talking to?

Blake, say, could talk as loud as he liked  
since nobody was listening,

you whisper a word  
the way a shy soldier  
carves his girl friend's name  
with furtive gladness  
on a temple wall  
in a conquered country  
his land will lose

and she lasts forever.

**26 March 2005**

=====

I need to see you say.

I have painted the whole city  
rich with considerable detail

houses and bricks and servant girls  
sewing by window light

but I used a dry brush to do it  
so everything seems thin, needy,

needs you in this *dürftig* time,  
I need to see you

speak the colors richer  
while I listen carefully

even timidly to what I thought I said

when now it talks back,  
the little dog in her arms, the odd

hunchbacked merchant on the corner  
looking up at the moon.

26 March 2005

=====

Isn't that what Eleusis was, a subway station for a train that never came, but that forever you heard roaring up the track, heard and knew, saw the headlight coming, saw and heard and knew.

and we go down into the ground to hear the horse  
and the horse takes her away, all our pretty Persephones,  
blonde and ashen and mulberry, away

(26 March 2005)

=====

To know this much and then be more  
silent music of the empty stone  
opened to the absence  
that keeps us company  
two thousand years, that is  
the time from when you were born till now,  
  
map of all time.

27 March 2005

## *DANSE*

So on the last dance  
she chose me – the Crown  
Prince's czardas that closes  
the bal funèbre– her hand  
clammy, cold in mine,  
my other sought the slope  
of her kidneys as our Gypsies  
say or as the poets claim  
the Hill of Dreams  
and she was cold there too.  
Which means my hands  
must still have been warm  
– a sign of life! a jasmine  
not yet melted in moonlight!  
(a flower is so fragile an idea).

27 March 2005

=====

Is it time  
to speak yet  
the long  
adventure

of the ordinary,  
wind through  
the trellis  
and a hand

reaches through?

27 March 2005