

4-2005

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What would a god be like if there were eight of them  
and each one a horseman or a falconer

wouldn't they be really just moments of control  
superior to mine, better aim, smoother trajectory?

And goddesses of some number also, controlling what  
scant expirings and floribund arisings?

There is a stone on my table knows more than I do.  
It sits there, part of ancient ocean, Thetis touched it,

it was old before the first woman walked  
along the tricky forest paths of their dry neighborhood.

And here is the stone.

20 April 2005

=====

As if I were the night  
and you the park

triangular: the sandy paths  
across the Deergarden to the wooden bench  
where the woman in black keeps appearing  
reading her book.

                    This time  
try to discover the title. It is thick  
as Marx but soft as Marquez

judging from her little smiles.  
The cover shows a sun with sunrays  
ardent in a woman's hands.

I can't read the words.  
Or a man's hands. Who can tell?  
And even when they touch you

how do you know?  
I sit down beside her, she reads  
quickly, like a learned person  
or someone greedy for the news

but what kind of news could there be  
in a book? Such a thick book.

I need to make contact with her,  
her soft pale hair, the small  
golden glasses on her nose,

so:

A poem is like a beautiful story  
with no ending, I say to her  
in my own language.

Then she says something to me in hers.

20 April 2005

## MOROSCO

mode or sashay of the Moors  
those dusky Sufis of the Ponent

old end of the Common Sea  
not common to me, not mine, no more,

the fell Pyrates on their waves  
rob me of my serenity.

And thou art one surely,  
breast disentangled from bodice,

copper hair entangled with sunlight,  
snickering of small swords,

a cutlass in every lady's hand.

20 April 2005

=====

Put any two  
together marry  
oats and be swan

genetics  
are perpendicular  
top the physical  
arise (...arise!?)

into the nomain  
of telling  
earwolves lurk  
their golden eyes  
our only light

to go by, any two  
take you to Troy  
where you languish  
unloved by war  
the eyes of the dying  
also regard you  
wonder who you are

I wonder too  
I bring you back  
chastened by my  
provisional identity

(the one who  
talks to you  
in your head when  
you read a word  
or better than  
any word the moment

when you read  
what is written  
in silver light  
in any mirror)

what word?  
a word I knew  
that knows you now

and all you have  
to go on is guess  
ever after  
the color of my eyes.

21 April 2005

## **This bronze knife**

surplus from or  
so much for  
the Trojan War  
or Fourth Crusade of

all things coalesce  
and all times are one  
around the phantom  
of a godly strumpet

hidden in the heart  
of war. Helena.  
Destroyer, Durga,  
Deianeira, all

of what must be  
or be destroyed  
in the shape of a city  
high citadel low hill

Pergamon in Brandenburg  
where an island has to play  
a hill's role in such flat  
country or a little chapel



hidden in the woods,  
that war is over  
my guess is after all  
as good as yours

webfingered halfnaked  
spring sunlight so  
much skin for such  
meager poetry and

still I crowded on my lute.

21 April 2005

## AGAINST AUTHORITY

Lordship is an odd duck  
among our recencies.  
Who would believe outright  
the Pentecost come down  
in shingle, gravel gospel,  
the *Sprite* of muchness  
trilling through webspace  
to guide us home? We have  
nada. The blue coat  
pharmaciaian with half a sonnet  
stuck up his cuff, we have  
syrup of squills and senna  
and virile unguents coarse with sandarac  
to orange your easy afternoon  
you girl at the head of the stairs  
and sunblaze your closed eyes  
sunset citizen. O love  
my lost entablature, so loose  
my lute. Lose it, padre,  
a man's organ not make sad noise,  
desire's clamor must be general,  
sphere's music and some Santa Claus  
left over from a past life.  
When will I rise up?  
When I know which way up is.  
A conundrum clutched  
tight in your paws.

2.

When I think of the sacred  
galleries of Keats I wonder  
why we fuss with that old Bible  
like Uncle Omar reading  
mossy Genesis when the Koran  
was bright and fresh and new.  
The news is what we're after,  
Solomon, the permanent wisdom  
embalmed in honey, Egyptian  
alabaster, it has to reach, touch  
a young man's lips and make him  
speak, and then we get the goddess  
Cinnamon running all through  
our houses strewing bliss.  
It must excite. The permanent  
wisdom must be lost in honey  
and found in mouth and  
spoken out. It can't be slow,  
solemn hippos snoozing in the Nile,  
it must kiss or prickle or arouse  
and make those sacred lips  
which from the beginning of time  
are only yours and mine give voice  
recite a never written rhapsody of salt.

22 April 2005

## PHOTO OF THE DUOMO IN FLORENCE FROM EIGHT HUNDRED FEET IN THE AIR

A chronicle of the coup d'état by which  
a woman wins a space –the place of questions–

inside a man's heart, chronicle of me  
staring down at the noisy shores of the Black Sea

I am often this airplane over everything I remember  
trying to make the real into the imaginary

so it will love me back and the waves  
wash away the differences I used to love

the heartbreaking aria of the doomed Protestant  
lover in Meyerbeer's opera, and wind

wind, cold for April, I quiver  
on the way back from the mail

the government holds me in its hand  
what can I do there are curtains everywhere

the coup d'état snug as a girl's lap  
history has such soft skin

any touch changes everything.  
Copper band around my head or cowl

just above my evasive eyes I am a priest  
of a none-too-smart religion barely surviving

on the hopes of the faithful, the young  
are on our side, and we have a handle on the sun

the whole sun, we owned  
nothing in the world but the light itself.

22 April 2005

## OLD PAPER OLD FOOD

Old food the tea  
from years ago  
dusty tea waiting in the pot

follow the woman in black  
she shows me something white

hurry

people are choosing old food old old food  
and writing about it to their dead friends

on old soft paper soft old dead friends

death softens things  
especially people

follow me says the woman  
in the black business suit  
I know her so well her  
clothes are new she is fragrant  
of new things and everything  
else is old

New things are our guides

museum guards Indian scouts

always follow new things

Follow me  
she shows me  
something white

then something white shows me a door  
she leads me through  
it is a lawn

                    crows are talking  
it is raining or just after  
and the crows  
explain things even I  
can understand

look she says and there it is  
a golden ring in the rain  
a ring in the grass I give it to you

I picked it up and slipped it on

I am married to the rain

it fits on the ring finger heavy gold  
a stone the color of rain the color of sky  
just after it is busy raining

it is the ring of the other  
she says she says  
now you are married

married to the rain and the grass  
married to every other thing

now you are priest and priestess of it  
roofless cathedral, your chair is grass

your robes are water  
you have washed everything away

I am afraid now

I want to go back to the new things

these things you show me I say  
these things are old  
this grass is thirty years ago for instance  
this boiling water is ice cold  
the tea is old, my finger is not my finger

nothing ever will brew  
we are too far from sea level

but she doesn't blame me for complaining  
the old food where we were  
is not for eating, it is only for remembering

anything you remember is food

that's what it means,  
the sky is a scoundrel who threatens you  
but I show you something that seems new

follow me until you do.

Do what? Until you be new.

Show me more of what is white  
something that is always going out the door

so I can hurry, hurry  
and aren't you my door

the only way I move  
through a speedless place  
root-still or panting quick

to follow follow



to follow your white thing is the same as leading  
or being a new thing or complaining  
till you give it to me

with no sorrow or blackberry bushes  
with a lot of rain and a tea  
made exclusively of dust  
ripening in the black morning

where the blue flowers hide inside the very grass they made  
and the trees are beginning to imagine the rest of their sermon  
saying always the same sort of thing and calling it new

just because I was never here before  
never anywhere  
never till yesterday  
while she put on her new clothes  
and led me away from all the soft tables

belonging is so difficult  
because the mind is always moving

and everything else is old and motionless  
or even new and not even you.

23 April 2005

=====

The long expedients  
of not quite desire  
keep close guard on  
the closet door

a crucifix nailed to it  
keeps the demons in  
there are stranger  
exhilarations than just gay

they live in there  
I sometimes join them  
going from my forest mode  
or mountain manner

into that breathless dark  
where sensation lives  
timeless hence eternal  
come home to my skin

*retour à ma peau*

from the iron city.

24 April 2005

## BACH IN LÜBECK

Grim harmonics  
spoil chapel listening  
this Buxtehude prelude  
disturbs also birds

something always lives up there  
– pigeon, rat, an Attic  
*agathodaimon*, serpent  
in the rafters dining

on the eggs of both. Racket  
of the organ's plumbing  
whose primary music  
scarce lifts above mechanic

din, keyboard rattle,  
pedal work, creak of lifters  
from pipe orifices,  
tubes of plenty, tin.

Copper and leather and tin.  
And wood. So much wood.  
Everything makes noise  
and into it now the Danish

fugue fixes its whim  
to emigrate across the shallow sea  
–sound like amber here  
then sound like sand–

and makes us want to check out  
of this seamy guest house  
back to the sky, by fugue:  
escape is flying,

flying means to steal  
what is not ours, wings.  
to ascend among  
the luminous entitled ones

up there who feast  
upon our musics  
the way Gandharvas  
subsist on fragrances alone

and smite the empty air with song.

24 April 2005

## MIDDELSPRAKE

To find the middlespeak—  
the bone between flesh and emptiness,  
hollow structure that supports the tune —

music (I'm thinking of Petra Lang) comes  
out of the bone.

Sun over mountain  
summons it. Mountain over sun  
summons me. I ride the shadow

the way dancers might ride the tune  
till it takes them there, us there,

have no other vehicle.

How the reasonable  
sound of a man's voice holds  
nonsense together, even poetry,  
and makes it

if not mean then *move*  
as if all we have to do in life

is be somewhere else.

And him too the hymn tune takes.  
As religion is the sound of it not what it says,  
o sad adrift without Latin, Latin  
was the whole opera  
and all that's left now's the tattered libretto  
full of curious taboos and unlikable saints.

Words move you by unmeaning,  
where move means dislodge, hoist,  
transport, deliver  
to a place that is yours

only by virtue of alighting there –  
but if you can get there  
it is yours forever –

like this squirrel stealing  
bird seed  
                  knowing neither verb nor noun  
but eating along the song of his feeling

as we some dark regimen  
speakless undergo.

25 April 2005