

5-2005

## mayC2005

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*muß ein lieber Vater wohnen*

but the second  
time he says it, it sounds dreamy  
a little less convinced, almost  
doubting, almost beginning to think –

then Schiller's soberdrunken certainties  
dissolve, and Beethoven in their pause  
doubts, desires, decides—  
and drowns all doubts in thunder.

7 May 2005

## ENTHYMOLOGY

to know what is buried in the heart  
between one perception and the next

between two thoughts the dark  
place that defines the difference

the clean desire rousing to be said.  
Met. What is in there? Who is speaking?

What do you want now? Say it.  
Who wants it, now tell me that,

who does this wanting in you,  
is it you? Or is it an other?

And do other others want it too?

7 May 2005

=====

Caught by my own thought  
I stood by the tree.  
Leaves came out and said it all again.

Becoming. Baldur's dream.  
And then I forgot what I was thinking  
and just thought. Till I was nowhere

and the leaves too had forgotten their lesson.

7 May 2005

## WIND

Wind. The edges of the sky  
touch us. The ends  
come upon the middle.

As if sleep were a far country  
I come home to day.  
But things have changed  
since I was here before,

the wind sounds different,  
I look and see a lot of leaves,  
they're moving, it must be  
the leaves that sound that way,

were there trees before I slept?

8 May 2005

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Small effects from giant causes  
like a printing press  
stamping out a million copies  
of a children's prayer:

Dear God let it all be  
the way it seems to be,  
don't let everything I learn  
turn out to be a lie.

When you get down to it,  
the only science is epistemology.

8 May 2005

## FUNDAMENTALISM

The girls turn to flowers in my hands.

The flowers wilt,  
the afternoon starts counting up the nights.

How many books  
will survive the rising  
waters of the Jordan,

the name means *it runs down*  
and takes our meanings with it to a Dead Sea.

8 May 2005

## VAISAKHA

Find us waiting  
to be holy  
to be more than this  
however beautiful this is

to leap over my shadow—  
jumping is the best advice  
every second spent midair  
entitles you to paradise

that park with no trees  
and all the leaves are made of air  
and all the greenery is gold—  
some people wear their nervous system

an inch or so north of their flesh  
so it is permanently over, adrift  
in the lyrical prose called Truth  
from which we draw our own inferences

from the leap of their legs, the smile when they come down.

9 May 2005



## ESCAPIST ODE

Does it surprise you more  
I am not who I seem  
or that I am? A thin line  
separates Cagliostro in his gypsy wagon  
hurrying north to foment revolution

from me sitting here wishing I had a cigarette.  
Same sun, and kindred grasses.  
People get tired of their worn-out loyalties  
foolish kings and merry princesses  
so they slaughter that bunch and summon in  
a crowd of out-of-town lawyers  
to impersonate the sons of liberty.

Good ideas lead only to the guillotine.

There is sense to be made here,  
a glorious freedom to be let out of its cage.  
Every government is jail. Every state  
is a disaster. The real star shows through  
sometimes. Marie Antoinette's pretty neck  
is worth more than les droits de l'homme.

Do not kill. Cherish the cute and the particular,  
the small and the ridiculous, the weird  
and the banal, cherish the other side of anything,  
King Farouk dressed like Babar but with a  
noble fez on his empty head. Folly is precious.

Make things hard for people to want to  
tell you what to do. Be the wise fellaheen of the heart.

No revolutions. Just aimless rebellion,  
revelry, ribald reveille, wake up. Just smile  
and do whatever you like to do.  
Do that. Get the soldiers staggering drunk.  
Just smile. Just laugh at them. Just say no.

9 May 2005

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Walking as far as there anyway  
buttress shadow moonlight around basilica  
who am I to hold up a wall

I am Joseph out of the south, *arrhythmia*  
the unshaping one, the Dissolver.

We swing the molecules out of God's orbit  
and set them free.

Childbirth of trance,  
shaman licks a stone wall  
until it speaks,

weeps, opens, lets  
water spill. The Child follows,

the body  
is the only accurate theology.

Nobody made it. It grew  
from Common Knowledge. Look  
at all these buildings  
in the shabby town:

that's who we are,  
the glory of the only.

In great eras of architecture  
builders *respond*.

Nowadays they ask questions  
but there's no body politic to answer.

Sorrow of stainless rooftops. I am Joseph,  
I tried to touch.

I carried

a dissident child  
across the borders of the mind.  
And sailed to a little island  
on the edge of the great mistake.  
Now it is dawn and my tree is sore

from holding up the sky.  
But I do it for you.

10 May 2005  
End of NB 276

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I've had a lot to answer for  
and nobody asking.  
The heavyweight ego  
behind the abstract words  
behind the seeming arbitrary  
one-night-stands of unrelated  
words – it reeks through all we say.  
Those who make statements are humbler  
than those who hide behind machinery  
dreaming of fame. What house  
has fame built now? What a pain  
in the neck, just below the right ear  
where Gulliver is waiting to be fed.

Give me two words to rub together  
and I'll rule the world

or I will sit in the corner all afternoon  
dreamy with the smell of myself –  
make the words come in your ear.

Proust's destiny. Leiris. The kindly  
older sister language is,  
already sleeping around with all the town  
and starting to show you the way to,  
you, even you.

11 May 2005

## NAXOS

Longevity a factor of cool mornings  
after hot nights. A fertile plain  
disguised as an island. Dependable  
distances. But what if Fomenko  
was right not about time but about space  
and everything is closer together  
by far than we suppose, and only time  
interposes to illude us in polyglot  
otherness. Pretend you're already there.  
I am the Bible, you are the Havamal.  
Together we Upanishad. As Olson said,  
that luminous Kor'an. Massachusetts.  
An angry god leaves his shadow,  
you see it in the women's faces  
at the Science Museum, women studying  
and teaching their children to study  
the whole cosmos of physical entitlements.  
They all show disappointment. But I,  
now that the lilacs of Clermont have  
finally blossomed again, and my own  
by the yew tree in the dooryard  
blossomed again, I know the distant valley  
is right here in my hand. Summer lakes  
and iron gates, a swan on every  
piece of water equably settled down.

12 May 2005

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I have seen the mountain  
come to me,  
I twirled her around  
with my fingertip,

they call this kind of flower  
'thimble' and this kind  
they will not call a rose  
though it is red and fragrant  
no matter where you carry it.

People plant things  
and other people look at them—  
there is some system here  
I need to read.

Hosta, columbine, morning glory —  
letters in an alphabet  
or squares on a game board.

The eye falls on them  
and the mind changes.  
How does it happen?  
What is the ranunculus  
talking about now?

12 May 2005

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Let me through –  
I have a message  
from the Emperor to himself.

Play ouija board with me  
tonight, my queen,  
and I'll tell you what he meant.

He stares across the frozen river  
wishing every human heart could freeze  
and no one feel at all

until an anxious springtime  
even his soothsayers cannot imagine.  
Soothe-sayers, he snarls:

prophecies to put me to sleep.  
Now will you play  
with me tonight,

one hand on the planchette,  
one hand  
in the other hand's lap?

12 May 2005



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A word

a hurt

a hurry.

Hurdle. Over it

hurtling. Say

what you mean and

men recur.

Fly over. See

the victims

scurry.

These words forget me.

Interlude.

A play with four virgins

dining on the grass

green wine and strawberries

how pale my profile is

I gave you all my blood.

My meaning  
was all my wanting  
you drank the sap

espoused me empty  
landscape as by Nethelanders  
eating the field open

past trees, sun  
past sun, another one

always othering.

Far me away.

12 May 2005

## A FAREWELL TO HOURS

This is a composition for the *tromba marina* or nun's trumpet – women were not allowed to play blown instruments – this great harp-sized frame holds taut a single thick string – made a sound loud enough to be heard at sea – from shore to ship

or vessel to vessel – a woman performs on it – slowing drawing the bow at different loudnesses – pressures – this is simultaneously spending time – sending time away – and saying good-bye to it as it goes.

12 May 2005

*Language makes it so*

There is nothing known but language makes it so.

Language makes it so what.

Deep in the amplexus of one woman  
cry out another woman's name  
and see the force of language with your skin.

13 May 2005

*Die tote Stadt*

In the opera the city is dead.  
In the city the opera is dead.  
Korngold moves to Hollywood.  
No opera, no city.  
Errol Flynn swings through the air.  
Now they're all dead  
and I'm the final opera.  
Listen to me sing  
through that woman's throat  
  
over there, the one you think is singing.

13 May 2005

=====

Cold bright morning. Cat prowls  
where cat ought not. Hmm.  
Things for me to do  
something about. A friend's friend  
hurt his back. Heal him,  
heal her. From all the pain  
this body knows a song goes up.  
Call it prayer. The cat  
hears it and goes away. My wife  
on the same day hurt her back  
a little, sacroiliac, I pray for her,  
all the pain this body knows  
is all I know, turn it into something.  
New. Prayer. Don't worry about to  
whom. Just pray. Doesn't matter  
if no one's there. Pray. You're here.  
That's the point, my body says.

13 May 2005

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I've been talking all week  
a dozen hours a day  
but as if it isn't or wasn't  
language I said. Or say.

And what is this in my hand now  
my mouth is trying to pronounce?

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Enough language to launch a small planet  
on its way around a dying star.

Maybe we give something to the Sun.  
Maybe Earth is a kind of answer too.

13 May 2005

I keep trying to figure this out—  
*La morbidezza*, anthem  
of this Escapist Movement,  
waffling goliards discussing exceptions  
plausibly lengthy footnotes trailing  
clouds of obfuscations which  
turn out to be a kind of glory after all

wouldn't you, you sufi sonnet  
simpering with octaves, all talk  
and no sextet?

14 May 2005



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And another thing,  
aren't you the cloud  
that brings the bird  
that brings the snow  
that melts the sun  
into a pale soup  
of messages on high  
you need a better  
Cassandra (Kaxandra) than I  
to read, she said  
and I thanked her deeply  
for her cleavage,  
the courtesy of her substance  
for what else have we  
to give but what we are?

14 May 2005

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Other things try to change me  
but I know. What do I know.

The fierce winter silence of New Jersey  
meadows even, tropical nights  
under sick grey fences in the Old Mill  
district, City Line oblast,  
in the Government of Brooklyn  
a billion years ago when I was

whatever it occurs to me to declare,  
a daily communicant much vexed  
with Hellenistic engorgements  
and every sort of excess a twelve  
year old could enterprise

if I may use such a word. You can  
if anybody can. The bats  
were frequent in the ginkgo trees,  
the rabbis loud in their ceremonies  
but the priests kind of slapdash  
at their transubstantiations,

ah those were the days, when magic  
was everywhere and every woman  
a witch and every wound  
healed instantly in that pure  
eternity called Never. I still hurt

from all of them, never mind the names,  
you know who you are, I bless  
the momentum of our collision,

soil of such dandelions. Eye  
of the dragon. Pectorals of the wolf.

14 May 2005

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Herb robert growing  
suddenly by my porch

goosefoot, celandine and such,  
the little yellow miracles  
that come when the mosquitoes wake,

pestilence is part of the ecology  
West Nile now and yellow fever then  
two hundred years ago coasts of Manhattan—  
the back houses on Cornelia  
rushed them up to house the families  
fleeing from the river meadow plague

still stand. Nothing gives way.

I want to dream a better Byzantium  
with golder gold and statelier admirals  
and every book bejeweled as the Koran  
and every veil whisks off  
sly in the penumbra of the afternoon,  
the blue hour when the goddess takes  
the face and form of every girl or boy  
and molds them to her own.

I'll start my work with this linden leaf,  
a heart as big as yours or more so,  
here, I bring it to you, the scraggly  
cat meanwhile chasing blackbirds.

14 May 2005