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But how can I not answer when
it keeps talking?
Sea by sea, roof by rooftop
gull by gull, it
is the interrogator.
I am the prisoner.

aus der Welt werden wir nicht fallen

I have to be here
I have to answer

after ten or fifteen years
it began to seem less painful
and I would speak a little,
little as I could at first,
then more. Then more.

The time came when I looked forward
every morning to my interrogator
who'd slip into my cell disguised as the sun
and show me things
and make me name them.

What do you make of this, she'd say,
and hold it out for me to look at
or gesture with the shadow of an arm
out there, towards something still or passing,

the sea fog walking on the grass
then gone, what do you have
to say about that?

The warm and the cool air come in together
sun is a halo in fog
and I am yours.

9 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

ALBESTONE, 3

But if I settled there
and watched it through the year

like Gosnold's men
on the island shore

all my mornings till
now it's near the window top

and who dares to look at it

In sea fog the white stone

Foam

On the table a white stone

Round makes

sea and stone

the same.

Shape gives light.

On TV I watched the naked sadhus
all greased and color coded, ashy
naked men grinning at the camera
like any other naked men
permanently drunk on some foolish god
as I am, drunk
on gravity and light and all the pale
omegas of the distant world,
in love with the end of time.

I prayed to time
and time touched me..
Now I am grey from his caress.
They warned me –
don't be older than you are
as I sat trying to be sophisticated
in the Captain's Table on Sixth Avenue
drinking my Tom Collins and falling
making eyes at a steely lesbian
across the aisle, they warned me
Stay in your own time, stick
to your own kind.
But I have no kind, I said, no kin,
I am alone, alive,
the rule with no exceptions,

a sky without a single star,

pure dark, the ice cube
in your glass too, I'll bob
against your lips whoever you are
but I will have no kinship,
no system with the earth, just earth
itself if she will have me.

And you reached out an closed
my lips with your rough fingertip.

9 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

UNBEHAGEN

Uncomfortableness in the culture, said Freud,
dissolves my desire in your demandingness
and that's the end of us a while. The rest
is the deep scarlet green-underpainted cope
of God the Father by Jan Van Eyck.
The radiant contradiction. Toujours le père.

9 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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The fabric of whose coat is wood
milk runs down his hairy legs
he bellows in Mediaeval Greek
about a boy, a boy about a girl,
some Sophie by some waterfall
her drenched dress clinging to her skin.
And then he falls. These frenzies
are all the mind knows how to make
but how can a bone be made out of wine?

9 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

ALBESTONE, 4

The one I never heard
is talking to me now

“our prayers are a ringing in God’s ear,
he sees what happens to us
--our wars and pestilences, our
all too natural catastrophes—
the way a man at morning remembers his dreams
vaguely troubling images
here and there and nothing clear.
He set us loose in the Unclear.
The uncanny is the closest
to him we can come, the hum
in our ears his answer,
sea fog soaking a traveler’s hair.”

Do we know enough
to know the stone?

Chance favors the prepared

.

Do we love enough
to touch the stone?

Are we here enough
to lift the stone?

A tumble of flowers
the lilacs still holding on,
June lilacs!

and the new roses
especially the white ones
near Morgan's other house
the richest smelling rose I ever
and irises a few steps uphill
and all the seaside roses coming out,
the wild ones, and beach peas, sea poppies.
Can this information save us?
And from what?

Can I walk back through Bruno, della Porta,
Paracelsus, to the original scholarship
that understood the motus floris,
the movements of the flowers
as they walk through time,

smell by smell, a percept at a time?
They are the ones who tell us time is space,
just another space

deep encrypted, our seeing
sees it only now and then
and we say The so-called rose
is blooming or an osprey sailed
above our house this morning
clutching motionless a silvery fish.

Then some day we find ourselves in time's place
perpendicular to this island now
and we are gone from here.
Time is the only other place to go.

10 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

The voyage of the sea, the secret.

-- Eric Elshtain by Gnoetry

Because the sea has its journey too, it too is moving.

The way global warming is a road for glaciers

And bee-eaters in their orange feathers

Pour north from Africa to meet the north

The sea is moving forward, dragging

The earth along with it through space

Until we drown or it dries – no other choices,

Madeleine. But she doesn't for a minute

Believe my gloom. Just stop believing—

Now touch my cool hands and understand.

... 10 June 2005

ONDES

as a boat is a box on the sea
as the sea is a wet tongue

saying something what
what is the sea saying

you think I'd tell you?
said the sea.

a wet tongue tells everything
language is something to lick

the air keeps lying to me
the fishermen are nervous in the sound

when my back was turned
the cloud came up and knocked me down

there is a merit in simple numbers
like a child in a forest

one thing after another neatly
yellow eyes in dark foliage

everything is looking at me
got here too late to see the night

now what now what
is the sun trying to tell me

didn't you know everything talks
but like a foreigner using her hands

11 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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For to be honest is not to be in the world.

Vindici, in *The Revenger's Tragedy*

To live in wine country not the same as wine.
Her face, explaining. All these people
are somehow famous. Not drink, not drunkard.
To live in sheep country is not to be a sheep.
There are other revenges sleep takes on the living,
dream daggers, deep drowning pools of forgetting.
Her face again, reacting to what she thought
I was saying. I wasn't being clear, who could,
too much wine, wool, trees, the tiny teeth
of things nibble everything too close, tomorrow
we will have nothing left. My house or yours
both built of grass. Their dog next door
howls smoothly like a wolf at the moon
but there is no moon. Explain that. Her face
waiting for my phony explanation.

11 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

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Treating the wound for absence –
the hot blood throbs in the sky –
nothing in the skin,

the skin is cold, tidal, succumbs
to hurricane and every season
the skin waits.

Suppose all the skin could touch you all at once
or all the time, the way water
does a swimmer or
air does every one of us
no part it doesn't understand.

11 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

KAYAKERS

down there crawl
over the sound
south of the sun glare
they move
stiff porpoises
four of them
coming towards me
from here they look
almost obscene
bugs on a marble table
racing slowly
towards the worthless
inconceivable
yet this too in pleasure.

12 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

FUNERAILLES

Earliest hour of the next day
tombeau the torch
leads the mourners
down the dark sea path
to a lodge under sea roses
and only the sea to be heard
under and over the scuffle
of their feet on gravel,
no requiem for him but the sea

the lodge is empty
each picks a rose
torn from those that grow around the door
each throws it from the low cliff
into the surf awash on rocks
and the leader last hurls
the torch far out beyond the rocks
to quench it in the sea.

12 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

[dreamt, as I dozed for a moment reading]

On his horse

both of them pale

silvery-white

riding away into the sky

very fast

smaller and smaller.

The vanishing,

the end of something.

12 VI 05, Cuttyhunk

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tell me the picture breaks
the rupture shows another
or am other, no wonder
any longer who is speaking

any loner does it
any word in a storm
erased by the same weather
everything is ordinary

nobody is thinking
but the moon is growing
they call it waxing
the sea says nothing

nothing of course
we have no word for
not just it but even
we are thinking.

13 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

Poetry, archipelago, island.

A part of any art is always waiting. Poets were waiting for years for Foucault, press agent of their radical disconnections. Poetry is half rupture, half rapture. Poetry is all about discontinuity, dematerializing the given 'unities.'

Archipelago, not mainland. Hölderlin's Archipelago beginning to show the way. Or us beginning to say the nature of this thing we so instinctively, drivenly, do.

Poetry transfers the sense of unity from the imputed object to the experience itself – like Buddhism, poetry is experiential, not propositional. It enunciates, it doesn't prove. That is perhaps why the wrongest poets (Milton, Dante, Pound) can also be (or might even be expected to be) so great. Burdened with preposterous or horrific orthodoxies, they are loosed into saying. The word flees from their meanings, perhaps from its own meaning, into the intensity of sheer, mere, presence.

(Subtle Milton inside overt Milton, the apology inside the apology at the start of Book I of PL. God's works need 'justification' – and the astonishing bravura that such a theological immensity can be accomplished by a poem. What must a poem be, to have such force?)

This transfer of the powerful *experience of enunciation* to the apparent object apparently addressed by the implicit or declared subject is the chief strategy, and chief crime, of poetry.

By making the [reading of the] poem discontinuous from the intention, game-plan, mind-set of any speaking subject (e.g., an author) the power of the experience is restored – and it, itself, the experience, can be examined, to solicit or enjoy the pleasures of *criticism* – a word to whose ancient meaning of judgment, discernment, we have added the more radical connotation of observation.

13 June 2005, Cuttyhunk