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INTERDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH

Yes I want to stand in front of all of you
thousands of you. No I don't want
to entertain you I want to tell you
I want to give you something very important
can only be given by telling by me telling you
and it will make you happy make you live
long at peace with the snake and the wren
the shark and the linden tree I will tell you
what you need what you need me for
to tell but what is it what do you need
you need this. Me. You need me
saying this to you now. Me as me as a me
that really belongs to you always.

4 July 2005

ADIRONDACK CHAIR

Lying back and looking up at them and through them
a long time I realize: these are my trees.

I am home. This
is where I live. I am in place, in my place.

I will not let anybody put me in my place
not even me. How
can anyone really be fixed?
But how can a man own a tree?

He belongs to them or they
belong to birds.

The thrush far up there in the almost dying locust
the cardinal down here.

4 July 2005

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All the houses

I lived in

are the same house

the map of me

maps them

longitude of my identity

runs through each

and every ratty couch

my Orient.

5 July 2005

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Caught on the lawn
wish her wishes on
she lingered

it doesn't take long
to belong
to what people want

the eyes are quick
and seldom miss
the nerve they feed

holds on forever
so in maple saplings
behind my own house

waiting her moment
the Russian woman
shivering in rain.

5 July 2005

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I tell you only what you know
already, I wouldn't dare to differ.
Thursday's child has far to go
and our lives belong together.

5 VII 05

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The offering. The else
be near a cliff
but fall upwards
into what you have imagined,
a paradigm of order
over the chaos of rooftops –
but what goes on beneath them
the heart-traps down there
Whitby Pawtucket Glendale
in every house
under the frail roof
a child is suffering.

5 July 2005

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The way children are silenced into life
offends me. I will be a lawyer
for their lost cause, to keep them
keen as on the first day, when pain
was also an adventure, when pleasure
cracked the sky open and was a world.

Things were new. All my work I think
is to let them be new forever,
not making them that way, but letting,
letting silence around them word by word
so they can speak.

5 July 2005

= = = = =

But then this
had to decide
my job or my
sense of yours

values, cares,
needs even
and what did I know
of any of that

more than my own,
pronoun
standing for people
what they need

they, it, more
something, less
the other, either
of us could be wrong

and nobody right
or the other way
round would you
after all forgive me?

5 July 2005

= = = = =

When the words show me the way
I go, and come
to a place unheralded

even by the work of getting there.
You call that work?
I call it being along for the ride

but being there after it ends,
the road, whatever it is,
the think like an arch

some Romans left behind
a tunnel in the rock
with words above the entrance

nobody can read but you
and you read them by going
through the words into that dark.

5 July 2005

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Walls near to window
floors near to doors
a shepherd in a white tree
or a girl anywhere

what is lost and what is found?

it's like a sky covered with frescoes
moving fast or a sailor
fallen into the hands of priests
white lost in all that black

and what is found so deep that no one knows?

catbirds elegant on the porch even singing
because the spider dreams
liberation too, yearns to be free at last
from all her web and weaving

what has to stay when she has gone?

the way you made me and get tired of me
forever, love song, tiki torches
on suburban lawns, a thing itself
is more than its most copious definition

what kind of animal are you that eats the light?

a woman bought three apples
and ate none, who was counting
and who holds them now, red and round
or green and truculent, an angry fruit?

who will quiet my silence into speaking?

6 July 2005

STELE OF THE NORTH

Genuflection. Waiting.
Arrivals delicate
rehearsed like tiger lilies
opening mouths
that never spoke before
a dusty wind out of the west
roof tiles curved
like the upper arms
of the emperor's concubines
we who are made of stone
know how to answer
every measure.

6 July 2005

= = = = =

I want to know how to pronounce your mouth
I mean really get it right
so it sounds like you in me speaking my lips
a kiss right now and all the rest
just a park in some city you left behind
you forget even the number of your house
maybe too many cities in one kiss
maybe I'll never hear you say my actual name.

6 July 2005

= = = = =

Because the tulip
is over and the rose
half gone and who knows
when the Rose
of Sharon that pale
American hibiscus
will flower, already
the beards are forming
on the sumac, white beards
that turn red, o years
turned me round,
where is the tree I was
all error and uprising?

Shall a tree get lost,
shall a man gamble away his sweat
and leave dry skin the wind
will not recognize,
no uplift, his terra cotta hands?

(28 June 2005)

6 July 2005

= = = = =

every oil
has one same smell
beneath the smell
each oil has

wet fire
the soaked flame
cold around your thought.

6 July 2005

= = = = =

Lost children
and the world a wolf

no wonder we wonder
from across the street they come

the vacant lot
looks weird in moonlight

no one to be seen
sound of somebody sawing something

it frightens me
wood is so terribly terribly old.

7 July 2005

VERITY

There was some rain in the night,
repentance. Thing call
I hear clear.
I am an evidence of you.

This paperweight is metamorphic rock
a chunk from the sea.
Wind makes the trees rain.
Rain makes the words wet
I wrote when I was thinking.

I am not thinking. I am not thinking
about you. When water solidifies
it is salt. When rain turns solid
it is silver. When sulfur flows
like milky absinthe and water
the end's in sight. In Hawaii
men lust for women, in Mexico
women lust for me. I don't know
why things are like this, I don't know
and I am not thinking.

There is an island
where small explosions jolt low trees
and airplanes rehearse catastrophe.

But everywhere on earth the day
proceeds by a series of shocks, gas
firings, piston thrust, hammer blows,
keyboard taps, tricks, her high heels
stomp their way down Trouble Street,
it all comes down to what happens
by itself, no more tricks, the human will
is the last illusion. Speak to me,
tell me I'm right, or interestingly wrong.
Say anything to keep me from thinking.

Be a part of what happens to me – what more
can a man ask? A mask. I'm afraid
I have wandered from my point
which was about geology and alchemy
or at least this rock that's busy holding
nothing down in my empty table.
Wind. Rain soon. I'm not so very
far from the truth, am I? I call it skin
and pinch it to make sure.

7 July 2005

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Put more things in
the weight should be enough to hold
tipsy businessmen to honest answers
and not so much flirting in sea-motif bars.
Now there's an old word, no bars anymore,
I know that. But it's such an easy word
compared to saying Neo-metal club
on the slopes of Cuzco where bottle-
blond nuncios ogle tourists from
countries even crazier than their own.
So bar. So grill. So dive. So you.

7 July 2005

NIGHT IN THE SUMMERHOUSE

I will describe the lower eyelid
of a Prussian general, taut
beneath his monocle, will expose
sedimentary rock along the river
–arkose, Flushing, Hellgate–
and then the mainland gneiss.

Will prove the distance between
oak and acorn but will never
tell you about you. About you
I know too much to say anything
this side of everything.

At the end
of life the funeral coaches roll
to cemeteries on the central ridge
then the mourners stop at Niederstein's
for beef and whiskey. What life leaves
is people living, trying what they can,
one trick after another.

Which brings us
to us. I will be your Navy someday,
build red brick walls around your secret
projects and I will rule the sea.

You come with the sea. Will belong to me.
Unanalyzed, you will be the integer
of my felicity, part of a very long equation
that leads to a winter afternoon in Calvary,
the drunken priest reading the wrong page.

7 July 2005