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Swordleaf a choosing
day paltering unlike
weather decides. Alps.
No culture in mountains
mountains keep thinking in
all thinking and no doing
only falling falling for
just the longhorn dance
the weighty shoe. Soggy
with wine the bone
trumpet too. And herb.
Flattering geometry ascent.
Chairlift over stampeding goats.

1 August 2005

= = = = =

Dissuade me. The cortex
belongs to the wolf
the animal before Socrates.

1 VIII 05

AN EMOTION

is an anonymous letter
picked up from the ground.
Who wrote it?
Who is it who is feeling
that way in you now?
Don't think about the feeling.
Think about the who.

1 August 2005

= = = = =

I hear children's voices
but I don't see the children

the sun is fierce
and the trees too far for shade

1 VIII 05

HAPAX

One time
only. Just this once
as love is
or a street, a street
is singular
in its pretensions, goes
where it goes and no
other manner.

As a mirror is
and shows only
what it is shown.

1 August 2005

= = = = =

I want you, don't
even know what
you look like
but I want you

don't care what you're like
I'm on the way
you're mine already
almost, you belong

to the strength of my desire.

1 August 2005

= = = = =

Catch up with the distances
before they turn into time
then you'll have to wait
and catch me next time round

your heart such frail machinery
all that fuss to make you blush
all those books and languages
to let me say a one-breath word

a syllable we both need, share
care and die for the lack of
such a simple answer to
the joyful fatal mystery all round.

2 August 2005

λυρα

Why lyre when drum
come? Lie to the soldiers
as they go to their deaths

make sailors drowning off Trafalgar
dream of schoolgirls
giggling on the pretty rocks.

2 August 2005

= = = = =

Facing the street
much can be learned
back to the linden
facing the *hazel leaf*
in the photographer's hands,
back to the house wall
facing the street.
turn one's back on one's house
ladylike in linden shade
smile for the nice man

not the rictus of complacent rage
that passes for my face
one's face is given by the photograph
by an anxious god

I'm trying to talk myself
into this poem by remembering
but it's all her around me already
in front of me
right where I can't see it,

all of you, everyone I've ever known
all together forming this actual face
I crank towards the lens,

I can think of them one by one,
where I got my face, one by one
the ones who gave me one,

till eternity is busy with their underwear
their cell phones the smell of their hair
one by one till the camera goes snuck
and one more chance is gone
for me to be the real me at last.

3 August 2005

(Chris Felver taking my portrait all morning)

= = = = =

Of course being photographed breeds
narcissism. In this case Narcissus
folds up the drowning pool and puts it
safe in his pocket to die another day.

He walks away puzzled by the eccentricity
of being anybody but him – how strange
other people are! And then he –
because he is not unintelligent – is aware

with a shiver how eccentric it actually is
to be anybody at all. How bizarre being is.

3 August 2005

= = = = =

a scoop

to let

light in:

a flower.

3 VIII 05

= = = = =

Definitions

begin this way

a little thing

noticed about you

and then another

nobody

likes to be defined

but me,

I have been looking

all my life

for my edges

they live there

where they meet

your skin,

the found country.

3 August 2005

= = = = =

Everything feels different today
the metal of the world
rusted in the night, even gold
in my own body oxidizes
and then what, a bunch
of new-soiled words
that smell of everybody
and all those times we
made sense together –
there is some sort of
summing up going on,
a throbbing snake-green hose
watering new-sown grass.

3 August 2005

PHILATELY

I know more about collecting
stamps than chemistry.
You lick it. You hide it in a book.

3 August 2005

102°

The egg they fried
every summer
on the sidewalk
in the *Daily News*

and the bimbo with knees
showing on the rail
of an arriving steamer
and the cat the firemen

free from the elm tree
and the kid licking ice cream
and sailors in Times Square
arm in arm with girls

how can a man
grow up to understand
with his own mind
what summer means?

That's what skin is for.

4 August 2005

= = = = =

A poltergeist in every home
or else things wander by themselves
all night – which of these hypotheses
scares you more? Is there one enemy
or many? All the objects in the world
turned against us, toying with us?

4 August 2005

WELCOME TO THE OLD COUNTRY

reason us. Be a clerk
and write down trees –
oak us, pine us. Know us.
Please us. Be
an alternative universe
hiding behind somebody's lapel
– kiss me and I'll disappear.

I'll go there. I'll bring you
to the other side of everything.
Be a clock made to run again
by one tolerable face,
be a bible with no word left.

Now I listen to the stairs,
the hollow sound your shadow makes
ascending. Night near me.
So many steps to get to where
I almost am, I am not ready yet,
so many years and still not here –
still not gotten to the top myself.

Be a fan, Korean, open, spread
jet black with golden lines on it

outlining trees and rivers, towers,
long-beaked birds. Anything but words.

This wood I own

you hear my bone

– be an old song like that
or be the moon (dark of moon
tonight, owls, foxes) or be Spain.

Nothing is as far away as we are tonight,
Samarqand is just across the table,
when you're drunk your turban uncoils
droops down over your shoulders
like a natural thing, like sunny weather.
We forgive each other endlessly it says.
I don't know, I have no time for books.

4 August 2005