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THE DAY *EB*

You meet somebody today.
A good guide. Sticks
as close to you as a tooth in your head.
Needs care. Hurts you
sometimes, chews your food.

The guide goes you here and there.
And where you go
becomes a road, they call it
your name and the guide
leads other men along it too.

That makes you nervous.
Who are all these people
and why does the guide want them
on your road, it is
your road, isn't it?

Only insofar as those who walk it
turn into you, these crows
shouting at a giggling woodpecker,
they're on it with you,
better make peace with all of them now,

there is no dentist for an aching road.

The guide brings you all the people
the road needs, a road
is only about people, including wolves and bears,
some people bite, can't help it, a road has room

and still gets there where the guide
shows you to go and tells you
keep with what you know
another me will soon show up
to show you where no one goes.

12 August 2005

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It does to wonder
and the book is night.
Spilled sympathy,
a raft in trouble.

I was a stream oince
and can't get over it
here in my marble years
a monument
to what I thought I meant.

Get out from under everything I thought---
the only thing that keeps me trapped is me.

12 August 2005

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So things the
name be seal

set on heart wax
(who bee did do?)

I call and call
you always come

the electric light
obeys your breath

syllables because
it always happens

I see it before and before
inside me not much

just your name
saying itself call

and call I hear
you spoken me clay

me rainsoak wood
me one who names two

chooses to choose
no will he no

more than any leaf
we are mouth.

12 August 2005

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Caught late night lingering
over my pens. Words found me,
told me to wait, wait.
Waiting is best, best,
like water. Wise
water. Wait.

Is it now yet?
Are we on this side of the earth
among the paniers and mules,
the elephant cargo of ink,
a paper big as the sky?

12 August 2005

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To fill things up with music
the way they do
till it turns into a kind of wind,
why? Don't we have enough weather?
Isn't the sun enough? Or the moon?
Or the little beetle on the leaf?

12 August 2005

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At last I can talk back to you
burn the old papers so the smoke
of what you wrote in summerwind
turns back into your face

and the image of everything we ever said
becomes a drift of planetary atmosphere—
now I'll never get away from you
and I can talk to you in the hollows of my head

disturbing no one, overheard
by no one, not even you, just a boat
far out on the lake and all the people
have gone home to the trackless city.

13 August 2005

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Can it wake?

Can it be

more than a hat on a head?

Gold doubloons

on the eyes of all the dead—

how can there be so much money in the world?

behold my body

lifted to the accident of light

trying to be near

the one I think is you—

I won't call you on the phone

or walk across the road to talk,

I'll look for you in the summer sky

crowded with rainclouds but no rain.

13 August 2005

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People eat eggs for breakfast

to be born again

at the start of every day.

Maybe they are.

Maybe everybody was somebody else last night.

13 August 2005

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The face of one
dances the body
of the other.

A hand is a word,
just a word.

The taste of blood
cadmium sunshine
dog rubs against shank
our only nourishment.

Sunshine vampires.

Whatever you do
you wind up telling
my story over and over,
we both hate that.

I raise them from the dead
so I can touch them
with this tender hand
and make them die again.

13 August 2005

[TWO FIRE PIECES FROM September 7,2001]

Having lit the citronella candle
there is charcoal on my fingertips charcoal
in the lines of my palm

suddenly I see me
the symbolized one
the written-on, the gouged
canyonlands of my identity
clear as a Bach fugue
is supposed to be, I don't know
music, I barely know my hands.

* * *

Gathering at evening waiting to see
the insect orchestra wander in
sleepy gnat by gnat and the last sun
trapped in the locust tree the linden
tree won't let it go.

[7 IX 01]

13 August 2005

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How can it walk after so much music?

Trees are not much help,
they're always on their way home,
leaving the game, ringaleavio,
hurrying to their mothers.

Try to forgive this orphan world
that wants you so much. I mean me,
That wants so much of you –
how can a breath dare to sleep alone?

Foundlings everywhere need our care.
That's what the rats are saying –
everybody needs everything.

Seven tenths
of our planet is water – the sight of the sea
cures 70% of psychological ailments.

But the rest of them, they like you too much
ever to go away, leave the sad continents
where people like us are stuck
with their desires and their fears,

snow drifting down Michigan Avenue

the lake invisible in fog – neither of us
can see through stone, how can we find
the one who loves us enough to let us go?

13 August 2005
for Jenn Reeves

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I've got to devote my life
to people who are really with me,
who answer when I doubt too much to call.
We will last together as long as you *specify*.

13 VIII 05

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I am a horse led to water,
I am the other half of what you know.
When you were a child in school
I was a word you erased or crossed out
depending on your personality.
Which means your methodology.
I am the venetian blinds ill-closed
afternoon sun sliced into a naughty room
where I teach you Greek.
What do you do with your hands
when you have them? What
is your favorite French opera?
And why do you like salt?

13 August 2005

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The only time they let me say this word
breeds nextness among birds and us
a spirochete listening in the interstitial space
for the key click, the scissor, the falling door
the sudden light – always late – hurrying
to fill up the room. The only time they
(and you know who they are) ever let me
say this word is when a drowned
yachtsman hears his cellphone ring
or on an upstate road at curfew
a Korean missionary in blue polyester
stops and admires a nibbling woodchuck—
what a beautiful tail! The things that live
hidden under every hedge! The only
time they let me tell you this is when
they finally stop chattering inside you
the politics of chromosome correctness
and let you at least think about interspecies
mingling, Americans and aliens, you and me,
a rose I sent you a year ago is still alive,
I learned how to hit it with my stick
and then time broke and spilled me
out onto your lap, your chemistry.

14 August 2005

(Midnight in the summerhouse)

even the smallest field
has the whole sky for its shepherd
even the moonlight is sleeping

14 August 2005

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Half moon. Scuff marks
from rubber heels on
the marble church floor—

matter has forgotten
its middle name I never knew
something piratical and hot

an r-word, a woman
walks the plank. In Japan
shellfish change hands.

14 August 2005

