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HEARING THE DAY'S CONFESSION

A voice in the dark
wet hood of the car
raking dead leaves
stadium full of fans
roaring at an unknown sport.
When the backhoe backs up
it chirps. Mad birds.
Rain reaches for the sky.

14 October 2005

"Four keys one tune"

--Emma Brenner

Keep your music, lady,
it is your door I crave,
the nest of keys to that,

first the big one to the bower's
white wood fence
then the middle key

with pretty amber rust on it
that springs the tower door
to the long stone staircase

then finally the little silver one
for your own bedroom.
And one key left for me—

someday when all the love is done
I will unlock myself.

14 October 2005

AFTER HOMER

Hearing enough to go on with
a long poem hundreds of years
after and after, telling not much
just a lot about some woman
took off her dress in the shade
of a fruit tree on such a hot day
and no man was there but a blind man
who never knew she was naked
but talked as if he saw.
She blushed to hear him.
The poem ends when evening falls.
Cooler. Early geese fly over them.

14 October 2005

=====

You used to be able to buy
hand-packed ice cream by the gill
(four gills make one pint).
What does it mean that you
cannot do so now?
What liberty is lost
when a whole common measure
is forgotten? What does it mean
that I worry about it now,
at midnight, after twelve inches of rain
have fallen in four days?
Measures are meanings in themselves.

14 October 2005

=====

As soon as the locksmith
or the forest warden,
as soon as the copper smelter
comes back from the hill
as soon as the crow in the corn
as soon as the milk.

15 October 2005

=====

Looking each thing in the eye
whatever eyes we have
to be seen in,
looking each thing in the eye
and remembering your mother.
There is no other way.

15 October 2005

=====

If it were a coat I would put it on
if it were rain I would study it
coursing down my windowpane
if it were glass though
I would break it to smash it
into thousands of jewel-like chips
and dangerous splinters
free from the terrible pale wholeness of glass.

15 October 2005

SOMEONE WANTS TO KNOW MY ADDRESS

Looks like she's coming for me.

Already my ears are ringing.

The movie is *Singin' in the Rain*.

The sign is Scorpio, the liar, the never-wrong.

The taste is garlic, chicken liver, salt.

The car is a Buick with three portholes.

The year is wrong. The forest

is on fire, her feet are weary.

But already I hear them on the hallway floor.

15 October 2005

=====

Something left to sell
when all the yard sales are done.
The space inside your attic—
bring it out into the rain
all dry and spidery – out here
it begins to shimmer like a tv screen
showing faint unfocussed images of
all you ever thought about up there
when you crept up there
where no one was watching
and you weren't even paying attention yourself,
pure thoughts woven from memory yarn
spilling out now in the late afternoon
so all the neighbors get to watch—
and they hurry to buy whatever they see
the way we all do, always
so frightened of the invisible.
Fill up space! Let there be no room
left for those people no one can see.
But that's what's really me,
the skin on my back,
my empty cellar when the lights go out.

15 October 2005

=====

One thing closer than knowing.

15 X 05

=====

Name it for me
this child you became
whenever I asked you
the simplest question.

15 X 05

=====

No summer no winter
no fall. The mind serene
seeing. All morning all the time.

16 X 05

The Contradiction:

to be here
with you.

16 X 05

=====

One by one the butterflies
go where they go. Autumn,
smell of ink. Words
on their way
away from us too. The blue
desires darken
to black need.
Indelible, the writing
presses down on the mind.
The weight of words,
the terror. The frail
papyrus lasts 5000 years.
And we are left.
As if we are what they said.

16 October 2005

=====

Come back from the Indies darling
and gather all those strings you left
loose on the floor of the hut – we've been afraid
to touch them, shift what might be uttermost design.
Or maybe you just tossed them there
and all their careful loops and knots and loosening
are just accident, mean nothing at all,
or no more than the wind does
and all this while we pussyfoot around
hardly breathing near the stringy mess
in case you meant it just the way it is.
And if we touch it you will never come home.

16 October 2005

=====

The accurate way.
Pilgrimage. Walk
around the living room
stepping over the cord
that keeps the laptop
plugged in. Recharge.
Look out the window.
Now come home.

16 October 2005

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Fighting with the weapon itself

few lives are lost.

Speak severely to your sword—

rust and time are on your side.

Marksman, tear down your target.

16 X 05

=====

I thought a sparrow,
caught a tower
even from its base
could see the whole mountains.
Door locked, eye left
to climb and guess,
the learned extrapolations of
desire, strung like
harpstrings across the valley or
the string on Kama's bow
quivering.

17 October 2005

=====

Guesswork

in ten volumes

waiting to be scanned.

Politics of flowers

impatiens perdure

pansies gone.

I wait to see,

I wait to be me.

I'm at the Imaginary Diner

watching the waitress pour coffee

for the next table, catching her eye,

getting my refill.

The cup. The woman's eyes

still holding mine as she pours.

The skill of a woman.

The weather outside.

A busy morning.

18 October 2005

=====

Wait to be me.

You too

have this obligation.

The Pope said it,

it's in the Koran too,

find yourself

in somebody else.

I disagree.

But I still want you to be me.

18 October 2005

=====

Too hard for here,
spillage of image love,
a snapshot torn
in a snapshot town.
High autumn now.

18 X 05

=====

A very
tentative touch
a stroke
along a painted wall
acid smell
of sunlight on a leafy lawn
a candle flame
preserved in amber
you can still hear
the wind that flickers it.

18 October 2005

PROVISOIRE

All this is tentative
diffident in the old sense
doubting the will
of the world to be handled
still I offer.
Touch my touch.

18 October 2005

HERBSTTAG

So many so lonely
seeming blue cotton
green walnuts fallen
all down the little hill
ten feet below the sky.

18 X 05

=====

Erode me, Desire,
till only you are left,
an ardency,
could there be such a word
hotter than ardor,
an ardency licking at the world
all by itself
and no me to pilot it
or write down in my dismal log
the ever-changing longitudes of love.
Just love in the world.

18 October 2005

MIRROR GATE

but don't go in,
a sparrow passed
the glass and no
reflection answered him.
So he flew in to see
and never came back.
I am here to take his place
to keep the balance of the world.

18 October 2005