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Cloud like mountain
over mountain.
Sunset soon. Still
I am wondering
about the opposite of me.

18 October 2005

=====

Taste this biscuit.
Verona. Sundown.
An hour later on
lagoons of Venice
in the last light.
This means moving.
Means being somewhere
then somewhere else
and frequently the places
in between. But the plane,
but the train. Big
station at Mestre
grey, grey. And pigeons
among us, moving.
Soon they will vanish
into the dark above.
Sometimes a mere
thing is immense.

18 October 2005

=====

Feeling close to it
walking through the bazaar
I'm supposed to call it the *suq*
but that name doesn't mean to me,
inside. Even 'market' is strange,
like 'hail' or 'privilege,'
not everyday, maybe just Saturday
or my father's Pontiac on the way to Rye.
Things are rare. Mostly
the world is empty. Only space is full.

19 October 2005

=====

I plan to whitmanize this rock
on my table, from an island not far,
a proper island, sea all round it,

and this chunk of it
here, roughly pyramidal,
full of truth, empirical spiritual truth,
this holds more of it than some other chunk,

I want to recite the specialness of this
and then it could be any this,
a color at the back of the mind
never yet seen,

not beyond violet or below red
but exploding from in between,
something blossoming out of green,
the queen's color, surely
she will come to me now!

19 October 2005

=====

Late night the incense – Kodo Bamboo.

The smell is a kind of order

like a government decree

you hear murmured about in the market

that gives its own strange feeling

to your shopping. Odor

pervades event.

When you can see

the smell, you call it 'the sky.'

But then you can't smell it anymore –

it has vanished into vision.

19 October 2005

=====

When shirts came back from the laundry folded over stiff cardboard
when most Chinese restaurants were up or down one flight of stairs
when India Indians were played by Jews and Armenians
and Red Indians by Italians, when the movies
gave away pieces of china and you could smoke in the balcony
or the expensive loges over the orchestra, then, then
America was in the middle of itself.

No one had to worry about religion or God
because everybody went to church, it didn't mean anything,
you did it the way you wore clothes. You knew
where you were in those days, and worried only about money and health.
There were fewer diseases then but everybody still died.
The food was terrible, but everybody lived.
I was born around then, dumb enough to remember,
smart enough not to mourn the passing away
of so many trivial, ignoble, a little bit lovely things.

19 October 2005

=====

The clocks in that country run a little slow
so it never quite gets to be now.

19/20 October 2005: dreamt

=====

The curvature of space

fits inside a crystal

you can wear on your finger

renewing Time.

20 October 2005

=====

You catch old movies
like dandruff on the dark mind
images of women say
falling past your terrified stare

we are mastered by what we see
you think
and then you start to hear their names
Stephanie Barbara Lilli
names nobody has any more

names old as the beach by the barges
names old as iron
then you remember iron
you think you hold it in your hand

and in the rough rust contact touch
the visual recedes.

20 October 2005

ANOTHER TORCH

Trying for another torch
when the first is fallen
still burning below the sea
you set fire to an autumn gourd
to a glass of water
you carry it, you call out
watch me, help me see
and there comes motion round you
as of countless personages
near enough to touch your will
but do they, do they see you
and how can they help you see
except by being self-luminous
forget your flaming glass
your blazing oak branch
your smoldering toadstool
the flames coming out of your hand —
they have to be willing to be seen.
You have to be willing to plunge
all your fire and all your light
deep into any water you can find.
You have to pray: pray means ask,
politely, the people, the people
you can't see, all round you in the dark,
ask them to be

20 October 2005

=====

Catch a lone transition
at the portal of the chicken-house.
Nobody lives there now.
They murder all the chickens, ducks,
geese. Fear of disease.
Where does the disease
come from? Who is waiting
behind the world? No one.
We have displeased the atmosphere,
upset the elements. Tidal wave,
earthquake, hurricane.
And the fifth element, Life itself,
is in these viruses that come to mend us.
Why pestilence comes after flood
and some great plague intermissions
our endless war. Athens, Thucydides.
1919, my grandmother calling for my mother,
Maggie, where are you, she hurrying
past the grinning doctor in the street,
the woman dead. We all grow
out of this earth. There are no
flowers at all except what we think.

21 October 2005

RAVING

Rather rest,
a meek ranunculus
for instance nowhere
on somebody's table
in a jelly jar, yellow
enough to answer sunshine
in its own language.

Any flower is a dream.
Embodied in our space
but for the plant itself
it's just a dream it's having.
So too there must be
dreams of our own,

real night dreams I mean
that are just dreams for us
but in another country
some other kind of animal
sees, smells, touches them,
plucks them for its
table, remembers.

Who?

Is that why the celestial
musicians are called Gandharvas,

'eaters of fragrance?'

They consume our dreams

the way we sniff roses or

vainly bent

to smell the pale ranunculus?

21 October 2005

[the tomato]...*populates the salads of Chile
happily, it is wed
to the clear onion*

-- Neruda, quoted by Liz Buryk

But in Paraguay
we eat another kind,
lamb's ears and rocket,
chickpeas and grape oil
and I love you too
but not so early in the morning,

dear onion. Clear onion,
clear water of Iguazù Falls
trembling past the busy
Lebanese crackdealers, the warehouses
full of plasma TVs.

What I'm trying to believe
is that the natural
order of things, things
that grow in dirt, things
that pass through the sky
on their way to nests everywhere,
Siberia, Lake Chad, Lake Titicaca
will always be with us,
always be our friends a little bit
past all our technical tricks,

that the creepiest postmodern condo
will still have its little mouse
and the odd green bug still
populate our expensive salads

and that the world will let us die some day not too soon
from some decent old-time human disease.

21 October 2005

SORTS OF ROSES

1

Know so much
and look like
and all they want
to tell is rain

2

instancing the skin of sky
down 'here' they have
no exact idea

3

at all or even where here
is no GPS no Internal
Geographic Magazine
to show the parts digo hearts
of 'handkind' where
they sleep their drug-deep
dreams like ten old
poems blithering at once

4

Holy chant! Mysteriable weather!
For them was glad enough a night.

5

For them was towel and a little stain
the whitest evidence and a prairie grace
imagine if there never were an animal
any animal at all the instructions said
imagine no sky at all what would we see
when we finally got tired of you and me
and looked up that way?

6

Followed, the instructions lead
to a pale door, Knock, be handed
seven roses each a different hue
a different scent some thornless
and some armed and nothing but
'someone' to tell them apart

7

or hold them together, this someone
must be supposed or all the roses fall

8

maybe even the door disappears
the prairie is on fire but the rain
menaces the blaze, nobody watches
any of all this, we are alone in the world,
again, again, it is too close,
too beautiful, too easy to know
and no one values what no one strives to see.

22 October 2005

=====

There is magic to this fallen branch
But you must pick it up for me
My fingertips already feel the moist
Impression that they'd make
In that soft bark and if the two—
The real impression and the one
Already in my mind – became
One single event it would be too strong
For even me to process it – sheer
Klang as the musicians say, noise
Abounding like a Dæmon's grace.
You do it. You pick it up. Rub it
Gently on your thigh, hold it
Up to your eye like a telescope
And sight right up through the wood
And tell me what you hear, yes, hear
In the back of your mind. Mahler
If it was me but it isn't.
And what about you?

22 October 2005

CHILEAN CORPSES

her poem said,
whose I forget, whose she didn't know,
the words just seem to go together
so we see again the soccer stadium
the arena all full of them, more
every minute, the killing squads
Spanish cruelty + Inca cruelty + politics
and the flies swarm over the dying wounds.

22 October 2005

SYMPATHEIA

the see-through blouse
of philosophy.

Drear me some other vista,
the cars patrol the night.
Where no one is waiting.

Wind and rain in the empty motel
-- we all know the story,
watching each other through holes in the wall.

*I saw one like myself
his features veiled
a sort of splendor
deployed about his brow*

then the line of sight was empty,
why do we look at each other,
why do we so desperately want to see,
just see?

I turn away to see the night,
all of it, thrashing around me,
no peace in the dark.

Far away tail lights, a dog
by a closed diner, some deer by the dumpster.
No one, no one. I remember suddenly
what I was looking for. An owl cries.

22 October 2005

=====

Eggless, like certain birds.

Cocks. Peacocks.

They dream of warm white things
oozing into the world.

But not through them,
uninstrumental, mere begetters.

Apophatic deities
mostly for show.

But a swan your break your
shank with his wing
and still float on the north wind
forever coming home.

Because some things do work.
Some skies are full of tenderness
and the distances themselves
are meaning enough.

22 October 2005