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SIGNS

the Day: 1 c'at

1.

The day when karma ripens
letting the ink out of the pen at last
in straggling lines across the paper
you and only you can read
when you hold your face up to the mirror,
when you smile.

2.

How strange a smile is,
rictus, teeth glaring, eyes gleaming,
what animal in you is rushing through the jungle
to meet me when you smile?

The smile is the most telling sign
a man makes, you know who
he is in that first moment of the smile.

The teeth the fence arrayed.
Broken bottles cemented atop the brick wall.
The curve of mouth,
this ship is sinking, all love foundering,

the simpering self-love in the eyes
proposes to share itself with me.

3.

The evidence is before you

Lords and Ladies

the words the ink let slip

the man could not dike in,

they flowed out onto the orderly lines

of a child's notebook

beginning with that mysterium tremendum

the inexhaustible riddle of his own name.

23 October 2005

=====

And anybody might be there,
the man in the garage for instance
and the broomstick in a cartoon
that trips Elmer Fudd yet again

everybody is funny looking
everybody talks weird
Nature is a speech defect
and the world is a disease

then you turn nineteen
and things transform themselves
into more or less what they
have long been supposed to be

and they pay you for believing it.

23 October 2005

PROCLAMATION

Where there was anything.

Anyhow a leaflet

proclaiming the new

Second Vermont Republic

a new kind of religion:

to live on earth and still keep thinking.

Its emblem a blue ball with a flame inside it,

why not, every disorder has a beginning,

only order, *Ma'at*, is eternal,

outside of time, unborn, always.

And I swear it's October.

Over those hills I swear it's Massachusetts.

23 October 2005

SOSPIRI

still, three hundred years
do not impede the stifled moan
the baby sigh the meek annihilations
of local pleasure or sometimes grief,

“ah well,” the poet said and scratched his shank,
pondering how imperfect all the other poets are
and he alone the judge of excellence, ah well,

suppose he was, suppose we all are failures
who turn immortal through a few delicious accidents,
the one page we still read of Sappho’s thousand.

24 October 2005

OFFRANDE

This particular psalter
I lend to the altar
of any goddess the town provides.

For deity is always only local
and all the infinite stored in thee and me.

24 October 2005

=====

*Wor de Möwen schrieen gell int Stormgebrus,
Dor is mine Heimat, dor bün ick to Hus.*

-

Where gulls cry
sharp with lust
in the storm roar
that's where I live,
where I'm at home,

Every night there was the smell of sea,
especially the summers, the soft fog sometimes
and then the wind, singing in the phone poles' rigging,
the smell the cold the wind the sound

and to this day the only place I feel at home.

24 October 2005

=====

But what it could do
so well armed is flow
quiet cornfields
not even vexing crows
who eat and ward
not even bending
stalks – what holds
those fragile stems
of grass up so high
under all that weight?

The height of a blade of grass is a miracle,
that frail things stand so tall –
if a man's mass were distributed
the way a grass stem's is
I'd be two hundred feet tall

24 October 2005

=====

How many alphabets
does a dead king need?

One for humming
his morning song, humming
to get through the door.

One to tell his modest history
all conquests and defeats,
his wives and catamites,
his mosques erected,
his monasteries carved in rock.

And one more alphabet
to tell the secret.

When we die we turn into music.

24 October 2005

=====

bya means bird. Means do this too.

bya,ngang.ba. Many

at this season. Ducks and geese.

24 X 05

=====

But what can it say
that bird in this sky?

Isn't it part of my eye?
Is there another place
for birds or anything to be?

That's where I want to know.
(He wants to go under the ground

where Berbers live
safe with barley and honey

and a door with a blue hand on it
a blue hand and a fish)

24 October 2005

=====

Ink acid eats the word in
but the paper flourishes.
Nutrition. The trans-
mutation of all things
into me and me into them.
And all by way of you.

24 October 2005

=====

If truth is ἀληθεία, the unforgetting unforgotten,
then what is tomorrow but the biggest lie?

24 X 05

=====

A young soldier in the Tyrol
wears a tall feather in his cap.
They look as serious as any others,
mean even, guarding cablecars
from sinister oriental gravity.
I watch them get on and off the trains
wishing I could be that way too:
dangerous and silly. Since
Cupid my master is just like that,
armed infant of so many ceilings.

24 October 2005

=====

With only the garnet on my finger
to keep me from the vampires.

They love the rain—
sky's blood they call it, and lick
one another's faces when we all
have gone out walking.

24 October 2005

=====

And as I lie abed
I am busy walking in the woods
twilight then and midnight now
yellow leaves of the spicebush
glistening in the rain
and heaven is the space between.

24 October 2005

=====

The siddha
who got tired of the sky
filled his mouth with salt
and sat and waited.

25 X 05: dreamt at waking

PORNOGRAPH

Gaze at the photo of the would-be mother
tall and slim, she would be your mother too
in case you ever needed to be born again.

25 October 2005

MOTHERS

Mothers have no shame, their tiger cubs
are all the world's about. *I love thee*
you say to her and she says I love them
my mortal products, my whole
life's meaning on two little legs.

25 X 05

=====

Go back to sleep and dream a better dream

wet rock outcrop

shale prow up from amber leaves

25 X 05

=====

One word word more
and who are you
after all, the others?
The kayaker helping
when the plane bellyflopped
and the sea upset?
Nobody could help.
the dream was continuous.
Rapture came later
“when men were all asleep”
and all the women woke
rose and decamped in quiet
vanished to their hidden oasis
you heard them singing
as they went, sounded like *Lakme*,
like songs I did not know.
They live on date and drink
palm wine. Mary
carved a stone flute
took her months, lifted
it to her lips and the desert
changed. Those wells, those eyes.

25 October 2005