

12-2005

## decC2005

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Not everything is caught beneath the tree.

Some eyes are still remembering—

wolf eyes or fox eyes or bodies

scampering away into the woods

leaving their fur behind. We grow

another skin, we grow another mind,

but the little blue pilot light inside the soul

never changes, never goes out.

Sin doesn't make it dim, virtue cannot

kindle it. It burns because

it is its nature to burn. And it is our

nature to endure its everlastingness.

7 December 2005

## YADOT

Some scatterday,  
some moon.

But when wend,  
or thirst is free

eheu, eheu  
said Latin woe  
woe this way  
we all go

then it's morrow  
and all done

7 December 2005

= = = = =

At the end of a thing like a day  
is a thing like a night. We stand around  
wondering how we got from there to here.  
All those hours, bricks, biscuits, miles.  
Rails, rods, roses. And here  
is no further than it was yesterday –  
same vases, davenport, same cuckoo clock.  
These are all the things we really need—  
it is what men called once the *Everlasting*  
*Gospel*, when the world runs exclusively on Love.

7 December 2005

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The alternatives don't bear thinking about  
now that the mural is flaking off the garage  
and the mail lady got her right-hand steering wheel  
with the subjunctives removed from editorials

there is a system in these things like chalk  
your mother calling just as you open the door  
somebody always knows what's happening  
tripe soup for breakfast for hungover Oaxacan

but penury is no kind of an excuse for love  
there are other amusements in a rubbery way  
living near an airport naturally she was able

he apologized for taking so much time  
but what else was it for seemed a valid question  
especially with his raspberries oozing sugar.

8 December 2005

## A DAY WHEN IT IS EIGHT IN ALL THREE CALENDARS

So it must be swift  
scientific mercurial  
yellow sapphire orpiment  
maybe certainly cinnabar  
and true.

### *Civil:*

-ity. -ize. -ization. -ian.

Civility is the highest virtue of all,  
since on it the functioning of every other depends:

Be civil = treat me as a fellow townsman, an ally, an equal.

This is the day of eights: understand

(primes and evens; 1+7, 3+5; 2x4)

Eight is gate. The line  
loops upon itself and makes a crossing

*An der Kreuzung zweier*

*Herzwege steht kein Tempel für Apoll*

but any crossroads leave a hole in things.

We go through. A temple builds there  
of round, radiant emptiness

for Solomon to preen in,  
basking in the starlight of his wives

those fugitives from grace,  
the tribes, scattered through the jungles of the world,  
o come home to him now

but it should have clarity,  
have a watch spring,  
a gold bracelet,  
                    a camel plodding  
sometimes forward, towards,  
carrying leathern sacks of oil—  
sesame, grapeseed, olive –

to entrance the skin  
of wrestlers in Arena,  
*la lutte*, sunburnt sandarac,

live in a warm land.

For Mercury says nothing to the cold,  
shrinks down, though every snowflake is  
personally shaped by his agency:

number, beauty, time.

8 December 2005

**Rilke: *Sonnet to Orpheus***

O tenderest ones, step from time to time  
Into the breath that doesn't intend you,  
Let it part and flow along your cheeks,  
Then tremble behind you, unified once more.

O blissful ones, you who are hale and whole,  
For whom the heart is always beginning,  
Bows for arrows and targets of arrows,  
More eternal your smile gleams from tears.

Don't be afraid to suffer – heaviness,  
Give all that back to the whole earth's weight –  
Heavy are the hills, heavy are the seas.

Even what you planted as children, trees now,  
grew too heavy, you couldn't bear them.  
But all the breezes . . . but all the spaces.

tr. 8 December 2005



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a translation from Rilke  
into Horace into Rumi into now  
the submarines stuffed with roses  
surface in the White Sea  
piloted by skeletons and every priest  
within miles of the coast  
all at once begins to bray his liturgy  
we have different words  
for what men do from women,  
humankind from animals,  
noses and snouts, muzzles and mouths,  
Persian verses for a rhymeless north  
don't want to say the same things again  
a small plane scoots down on the ice  
but will it ever take off again  
and mount the marble steps of sky  
to lay our grievances before the mighty one  
who thinks he made all this?  
Irreverence is our only answer,  
peasant cunning, a hand beneath your shirt.  
I don't ever want to say this thing again,  
the man frozen in the glacier seven  
thousand years whose hand I reached out  
for and almost touched, Bolzano

. . . 8 December 2005

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Can this help position me  
on the outside of Catullus's  
girlfriend's bird's empty cage – all  
gilt bronze and bearing  
signs of avian voidings?  
Where is the trick to this trap,  
the piègé chalet halfway to heaven?

... 8 December 2005

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Can I tell you,  
and tell?

How long this answer,  
to have so small a question.

Or is it only the other  
who calls the same same?

8 December 2005

## MY ASSASSIN

My assassin  
coming towards me  
all these years

coming for me, his paths  
intricately weaving  
in and out of mine

sometimes we're only  
an hour or a yard apart  
but he can't  
leap out of the line  
he must follow,  
the appointed line

and I must too  
however close I feel him  
coming, closing.

(8 December 2005)

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There is a place  
where the evening  
star casts a shadow.

All I need  
is to be in that place.

(8 XII 05)

= = = = =

If I were elegant  
it would be winter:  
trees outlined – trunk  
and branch both –  
with snow by Otis,  
Becket, down  
the eastern foothills  
then autumn again.  
I would be a kind of tree  
but not the kind made of wood.  
I can't stand wood can't talk.

(Boston, 25 XI 05)

(8 December 2005)

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In the restaurant a big  
crystal chandelier:  
you are the heart.

The heart again. The crystal  
stays. A voice  
turns into crystal,

breaks. The fracture  
(*fractio panis*, breaking  
of the Bread)

of a sound  
is a word.

It is this that speaks.

When a crystal breaks  
the word speaks.

Why else all the light in the world?

Kingston, 8 December 2005

*FRACTIO PANIS*

Breaking of the bread  
in the priest's hands  
as it used to happen  
in another age another  
religion. What happened  
to the mind when the words  
broke the bread? What  
came out? Or what  
of us went in? And are we  
still there, still part  
of the dry bread  
lifted in his fingers  
lightly towards  
what entirety of which we  
might be this fragment?

Kingston, 8 December 2005



## CASTAWAYS AMONG INTERLUDES

a blue flower stuck to his hands  
holds her, ouch a thorn who  
thought rose roses could be blue, you?

Always that old movie, wicked Conrad  
Veidt offering the Blue Rose of Oblifion  
to the pretty girl, then what?

We were all brunettes in those days,  
a scatter of sparrows  
leaping from a heap of scraps of rolls

—nobody ate bread, everybody  
Kaiser rolls or danishes – can a songbird  
digest cheese? Do fish really feel pain?

Is there a little lady keeps a light for you  
lit in her biggest window, find your way home?  
And even all the ones that died still come to call:

that is what a city means, there's always  
room for the dead, always a column of calm air  
vibrating somewhere for them to use

bend and make quiver till it sounds their voices,  
that is what a city is, all the voices of the dead  
speaking at once. I'm not making this up, you know,

I can name them, I hear them, the dead  
of Eighth Avenue have a different voice  
from the Lexington Avenue dead,

they walk easy in our new snow,  
sometimes you see the flakes one moment  
define the curve of a shoulder or a brow

like Claude Raines' hat in *The Invisible Man*  
and then you know. The movie never ends,  
we are in the invisible city that keeps weaving

through the visible, and not just the past,  
the voices of the unborn are just as audible,  
it's up to us to tell the future from the past—

they can't, only the living have a thing about time.  
The others go about their business  
instructing us almost by accident, rushing along

through the endless curriculum of their pleasures.  
That's what they do and what they want to do.  
Through all their joys we shoulder aside

picking our painful way to what seems to be now.

9 December 2005

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*listening to Petra Lang sing Cassandra*

Where is the road going  
I keep forgetting? The stone,  
the stone!

                    And when we get there  
the woman with a voice  
of honey a voice of amber  
will begin to sing.

Then the stone will open.  
And we will be there with her,  
waiting, full of hope,  
and into our faces will breathe  
the Earth Wind  
that for a million years  
lingered thoughtful inside the stone.

9 December 2005

## FROM THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE HOLY GRAIL

Parsifal at the bridge  
stands still. He never  
left her, never  
crossed the stream.  
His mother still lives,  
right here, not yet  
an old woman,  
bright her eyes  
and wise her counsel.  
Listen – all that  
is a dream.  
You are not a king.  
Or if you are  
it will come to you  
quietly and true,  
silver pennons flying  
like the rain coming over the hill.

9 December 2005