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decG2005

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Some sun
oyster shell sky
the number One
lifts over the walnut tree
mixed up with cloud.

It think Plato called it
Lydian Mode this tune
we naturally spread
out from the piano to Japan

the western wind.
Coughing from a cold,
listen to me
bark out surmises
as if I were some honest
sort of Pharaoh
standing on the roof and seeing

while all the rest of you
are busy with bricks and onions.
Not so. Your enterprise
is my milk, all night
I read the strange books
your daytime worktime jabber

writes into the world
scroll by scroll, office
party and retirement and who
is doing what with whom—
last vestige of a case system
in our mother tongue, the thing
the sun (see item one)
also teaches, day
by day to decline.

19 December 2005

=====

Ready to reply – little
then less then none then now.

Nunc.

Possum trundles down through snow.
Of course it takes a long time,
everything does.

I was born on a nimbler planet
with everything right there to hand
like a permanent luau

meat and water,
fire and women,
not a god in sight.

You'll ask me why I came down here –
I think it's the view, the groan of working men,
the hard music of wanting what you'll never get –

aesthetics is a sadist's discipline,
door too narrow to fit the oxhorns through,
freezing morning, frost-encrypted windowpane

delight on delight. To watch the differences
the glorious inadequacies of making do
your planet where life is still improvisation

and you haven't got a clue to how it works.
Yet it is you, and nothing but you, and you
are god and devil, king and parliament and slave

and you through all your roles before lunchtime
and go to the opera house at night
and think Is *this* what it's about?

19 December 2005

=====

I don't need to know
any of that.
A window
being hammered in a wall.

Eye love. These things
these tender empty eyes.
Eye lore. Glass works.
The moon is waning

but still incendiary on the snow
counting the tree trunks
until all by itself
the music comes.

19 December 2005

=====

The look of the feel – chiffon
color of mauve lilacs
fading after a week on a chilly
sunporch though –
the look of a feel
swoons the hand's distant eye,

contact made but the goal
as far away as ever. Torment
of images, I worship thee.
I set this snapshot up
to show what I can never have

no one can, to touch
this one so seen
so deeply seen
would be to break
the eggshell of the world,
all our pretty seeming.
The have is hurt. The want is word.

19 December 2005

ST LUCY'S DAY

Sun out now, what is she
rehearsing for this time,
what glorious afternoon?

The sun goes shopping –
a Christmas present for the moon
but the moon is in the mall every night
so how to surprise him?

The sun puts on her shades
and looks in the unlikely places,
winter cruises, cell phones, hippie candles,
bat tub conversion kits, would the moon
like his ears pierced, or his nose?

Among so many mottled histories who would notice?
Does the moon need a winter coat,
a pair of shoes? How hard
to choose. That's why we see
so little sun these days – tonight or tomorrow
the sun will make her choices
and start spending more time with us again,
right there, over the sapling fence, up the hill.

19 December 2005

=====

While I slept
it snowed
then sunned
now I'm me
again it's
brighter than I am
because I was a candle
flame sleeping in the light.

19 December 2005

[Dream Text:]

You can bribe some gods and most priests.
But this one, who had such power,
had such power that the gods
the way we give power to those we depend on
depended on him, this one, Thoth or Tehuti-like,
this one we also could trust,
his radiant changefulness.

[and the image in mind when I woke to write this quickly down was of a Thoth-like, sometimes ibis-headed demigod]

20 December 2005

PLAYING CARDS UPHILL

I lead my deuce of savages
you take with your trey of dogs,
and we're even. I have peace
(the prince of persimmons), you
have energy (the eight and jack of flames).
But it is so hard, the hill,
the hurry, the never-ending struggle
and against gravity and rock and scree,
so many animals feeding round our feet,
none of them mean yet but you never know.
A truck down on the highway slows
as if he sees us and wants to join us,
wants to come up and play.
O god the unauthorized players of this game!
That's where the real horror comes,
someone stepping out of the trees, smiling,
coming towards us with cards in his hand.

20 December 2005

COUNTING FORWARD

A word on the street
amphimacer Coleridge
said his name
was, like Roosevelt or Rising Sun.
A summer place.
A tree who came along and talked.

20 December 2005

GOSPEL CHOIR

the walls around me shiver with light
and I have a trumpet too
like the young Jews around Jericho
not one but all of them
lipped their instruments
the bell-shaped mouthpiece moist
and ready, do you hear it yet,
a sound give off by the sky
which when you hear you rev
your engine hard and pop the clutch
skidding up the old road through the swamp
where we know the thing is waiting
we have to drive right past, fast,
its alluring flanks its monstrous eyes
like half-moons of idiot desire—
they way you look when you chance to pass
a mirror on your way to the bed,
A child is screaming in the forest—
how can we tell solid ground from muck,
why does the road itself shimmer in the moon?
Are we dead yet?
Is that what this urban legend says?

20 December 2005

IMPOSSIBLE MIMES

The man I think about is not the man he was.

Specular confusion here –

Leibniz disagrees but then he would –

I saw this angel in a mirror: his face
was around my face, very large and bright,
it was as if my face were an imperfection
on his own, a mole or growth
of diminished identity. Because he
had something of the real about him
and I much less, no more than a closet
to store a forest in, or a little glass
to swallow up the Rhône.

But I saw his face, and this much I can report,
send escudi and I'll buy a bigger mirror
with gold handles so my wife and daughter
can hold it out before me early one morning
and then I'll tell you if I see his Body too.

20 December 2005

BRUTAL. BREAKUP.

Bridal veil.

The path beneath the waterfall
and then all your clothes are gone
and your ideas,
and there's only that roaring cave
with dark millrace flaming with gold—
this is your marriage.

It is a thing like money,
a thing like pain. All you wanted
was to make things happy.
People. Their pathologies.
You married every one of them –

o I know those eyes, I know what they mean
when they look at me, I know
when I am licensed
to belong to another person's mindlife,
yours. We are caverns
to each other.

2.

The word looks like beach
but it's break. The bottle looks full

but it's light, our strangest milk.

The hand looks like mind

but it is yours, the fine

lines of my confusion

weave across your palm.

As if we really were

a question and an answer.

3.

Or a fish in a mountain stream,

who knows what kind of thinking

goes on there? Does it entertain

all the ideas that fell away from you

when the water hit? Night.

So much remembering going on.

Pallor of the newly fallen,

flags in the mud, some of the mud

is on our skin now too,

face out to sea. The monster

is waiting. It comes to carry off

our intolerable virginity.

Be lost in me, I want to say,

but that's just romance, folklore,

mediaeval. The wind hears

what I really want: help me

make it be the way it really is.

20 December 2005

VICTIMS ALL

Can this precision instrument
(a flock of crows)
apportion sun and shadowlight
to the snowfield? They do.

A crow slipping on an icy slope
beneath the tree. Everything slick—
the crow skis downhill.

The bright. Determinants.
Grammars. Polstermöbel.
Subway strike hallucinogen?
Transponder Raffenneister who.

The people who do things to others and
the people who do things to themselves –
do what the day does, get dark.

Down here the devil writes the scriptures.
Down here the devil builds cathedrals.

Only a man with his back against the wall
has a chance to see god. Gaze at the ground,
citizen, partner in this eternal crime,

the theft of life itself: in a fennel stalk
kept cool, the sperm of the high gods
brought down to us by Prometheus—
yes, that kind of fire.

2.

It's not that I have too many things.
It's that I don't have enough me's to use them all—
the defect is in myself,
my poverty of masks, paucity of fingers.
How many hands I'd like to have!
I love Imelda Marcos with her thousand golden shoes!

3.

Raptors they call us but we are reeds
bent low in the wind of our appetite.
We have no power but what we want.

4.

Call the drugstore. Inject something quick
in the mute vein. On its way back to the heart
your blood and its chosen chemical will pass
through Sèvres-Babylone, emerge and stroll

down Boulevard Raspail to my first hotel
where fifty years of rubbish is neatly stored
in my cells reanimated by the simple
ride of molecules through the Métro of my body.
And you walk too, coughing as you go.

21 December 2005

BUSY SIGNAL

The necessity is desire –
taste of coffee – brewed
to disenchant afreets.

Magic saves me from magic.*

*There is a kind of laughter
you can program into a text
by gerunds occurring at intervals
natural to the Torricelli Ratio.
No matter what the text itself
seems to be talking about,
the reader bursts out laughing.

Or consider another example:
a girl reading Alice in Wonderland
or its sequel is protected
random underworld escapades
by the law of Unicity –
a thing can happen only once.

This law is sweet in the mouth,
like a symbol of the universal religion:
a hand in your hand,
a mouth breathing in your ear.

Heart throb, mayonnaise** consistency

** the commercial not the culinary quality,
a thing in a bottle, a waste basket of slack oils,
mortal armory. Darling,
I want to talk to you *now*.

said to belong to the muses, hence called music,

but not. Walk there then come home.

The phone is like the bathroom occupied.

21 December 2005

Red Hook

TOMORROW

One lovely thing about tomorrow
is that it does not exist,
is named but not defined –
I can say Thursday Thursday all I like
and nothing changes. It is like chess,
the pieces in their starting places,
sleeping horses, mossy towers.
Rest. Nothing will ever happen now.
Gaze hungrily at what isn't there.

21 December 2005

Red Hook