

12-2005

## decH2005

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Look for the place where the stream falls  
and the road rises – there, where the phone rings  
and the woman from the wheat farm  
calls to tell us the grain is risen  
gold and red and white by turns  
over the eastern hill and I believe  
anything I'm told, any god there is  
stark naked blue or all those arms or pale  
in the core of the morning – yes I will  
I say to the telephone, yes I always will,  
hold it for us tenderly, we're on our way  
deep into your ovens, your plans, your mouth.

22 December 2005

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I never wrote  
another life  
but this

These leaves  
in one basket  
days, most  
all the days  
I ever had

count them  
and the ones  
left over  
are for the nights

*o und die Nächte*  
where each dream  
is a year of its own  
a year of days.

22 December 2005

## COUNTING BY CONTRARIES

I had an old book  
that showed the flags of Europe  
Serbia was there  
and Russia with an eagle on it  
and a little cross still  
there for Denmark.  
How long a sign lasts.  
The mottlings on the moon  
whose fingertips permitted them?  
I read any pebble that I see  
in search of primordial identity.

22 December 2005

## THE WOLF'S CONFESSION

Trotting unseen through the marketplace  
biting pretty people on the hip,  
quick chomp, let go, or little nibble  
seldom drawing blood – sometimes  
only a thin scarlet trickle down  
their white chlamyses reveals  
my pilgrim caresses. What I love  
I lightly wound – no blame.

But priests! I have antipathy  
to priests, they are so clean,  
clean as dentists, clean  
as scouring powder, they taste  
of all their sedulous abstentions  
and water and ignorant pride.  
So what am I to do with them,  
I will not bite such thin stuff  
so I stare at them with my gold eyes.  
I live in the corner of their sleep,  
a filthy wolf to look at them  
just look, and my growl you hear  
in their chests sometimes as  
they gasp and toss and turn  
beneath their crucifixes.

23 December 2005

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*These woods where alpine essences were gathered...*

a line from Jules Verne, essence of a stone up in the sky  
garnered in a leaf and its stem, its hundred year old  
stem all wood and permanent:

“God only knows  
what happens to my leaves, my little mouths, my hands—  
they fall from me and lie or blow away  
and after a long time spent bare with thinking  
my new leaves come and I can feed again  
and talk. But what are all the dead leaves for,  
thousands of years of them, shouldn't the world be  
full now with all the things I've thought, I and my mind,  
how can there be room for anything but my leaves?  
Yet there is, and my leaves are all gone green again.  
and there always seems to be something more  
to be said and I survive to say it. And all the while  
the mountain says nothing. Can it be  
that all my leaves with all their talk are speaking  
only this nothing that the mountain says?”

23 December 2005

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Logothete but not elected.

Appointed. By the Sea Gull Emperor.

In service to the Seal Queen.

Wearing my cormorant uniform  
my outstretched wings on which  
the whole history of the world  
appears one word after another.

I am a sign.

23 XII 05

## HEILIGABEND

Ballet dancers in the Austrian palazzo  
mean it's Christmas Eve. Nobody born  
anymore. Not much fun in dying.

In between there is the dance, see here,  
the wax drips down the chandeliers  
gold as molasses in my mouth or yours  
we don't have to decide just yet.

The library has marble floors, glass doors  
to keep the books asleep, a statue  
of the Emperor of the Middle in the middle  
naked marble with a golden wand.

I suppose it takes magic just to stand there  
year after year looking beautiful, yes,  
what could be more magic than a thing?

Outside the eventful snow. Picture me  
telling you this, picture you listening.

No fireplace, no glass, nothing but opera.

The oval-faced soprano opens her mouth  
ovally, very, and shares her mild desire.

Then the tenor gets to exaggerate, which  
is all music ever tends to do, left to itself,  
meaning to us, the listeners, we dogs  
lying lazy all around its chilly house.

24 December 2005

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I want to walk into your shadow. And what do I there? I nibble the shadow of your heels until you start shifting your feet, nerves they call it but I know better, my Czarina, it is me. Not till you lift one leg over the other at the knee is the heel of the one safe from my gnaw, but the other...ah, the other! Lies at my mercy. And we who walk into shadow show no mercy. There is no sun in there to show us.

And speaking of nerves, consider what a person is: you are a tree of nerves, a great sprouted blossoming plant of neural networks, ganglions fruiting on the vine of you. You are your nerves, my Czarina, all the rest is just meat.

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I too have sat dined at the Verdurins,  
was just as dopey as the ones I ridiculed  
across the table beyond the pale  
preposterous tureen, sneering their way  
as they were keeping the evil eye on me.  
This is called conversation. Words we speak  
are as the farts of mental bewilderment,  
terror, sleep. This is called language,  
a noble animal we bruise by using. Our beast.

24 December 2005

## CHRISTMAS EVE

*for Charlotte*

You ask me how your necklace looked  
the little silver one of leaves with glittering  
stones all simple and lean as a thought  
and I want to tell you it looked beautiful  
but so did your mauve lace-necked top  
and your dark skirt, your boots, your earrings,  
your hips and arms and breasts  
and the beauty of your face still makes me shy,  
because you were the loveliest girl at the party  
and all the pretty ladies with their pretty ways  
and moues and moves and pouts and smiles  
and come-hitherings and their little babies  
sent to crawl cutely this way and that or drowse  
on mama's photogenic embonpoint,  
all these seemed false and trivial, even the ones  
I knew were nice and really unassuming  
but the look of them would kill the heart  
whereas to look at you makes everything  
Christmas again and I thank the light it's you  
I come home and be with every night.

24 December 2005

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How was your Christmas?

One Christmas is much like another. Christ is born, he grows up, learns something he wants to tell us, and we kill him. It seems to happen every year or cycle or whatever it is, again and again. I wonder if it will ever be different. I wonder will we ever let him live. And if we did, what would he tell us then? What inconceivably radical understanding of the way of things? Would he let us look through the eyes of silence?

24 December 2005

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as if rain  
could come out  
into snow  
we stand to believe  
the simplest things.

24 XII 05

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Less from the old weather  
and more from the moves

they people what they do

I am a dancer, I inhabit my action  
(the glove yearns for the hand)

25 December 2005

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Now who is this child they say is born?

“color of wheat the color of corn” they said of him when I was a child, I saw no child, I saw always the man in him, born with holes in his hands already, hands he brought close to me, to show the light through.

Who is this child they say is born?

The mobsters in blue suits smoked outside in the snow around the edges of midnight Mass. What does this have to do with that, that’s what the child I was kept wondering. What does this anger, this money, this meanness, have to do with that child, what child? Inside the church, Mrs Grimaldi sobbed for her dead son, apparently indifferent to this Son just born. Nor her son. Or is it? What does any of it have to do with him?

Who is this child they say?

I keep thinking I know something about him, something everybody knows or nobody knows, I don’t know, but I keep knowing something. Seems strangely small things I know: that he spoke Greek of a sort every day, that he lived with a woman with hazel eyes and very dark brown hair, that they were probably married, that he spent most of his time traveling until he came home and met her and settled down for a while, but couldn’t stay settled. Couldn’t keep quiet. He started to talk, and wander around talking to people. He talked not the way priests and professors talked, but the way people talk who really know what

they're talking about. Who have learned it themselves. Who know the words, but have also learned by themselves and in themselves the referents of the words. Words like kingdom and father and changing the mind.

=====

Alone in my own house  
I'm standing around at a bad party  
and all these super-dull people  
in my head keep moving me  
around from room to room  
as if I'm looking for something  
to eat I'm not hungry  
or something to read  
but I'm not interested  
I want to put down something  
I'm not even carrying,  
that's what I want to do  
I want to forget and start over again  
but there are all these rooms  
around me, all my life  
my fountain pens my desires.

25 December 2005

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Always time for a walk.

Time has walk

in it as walk has

permission to behold.

Gold. Granted things.

In my veins a veering

to be there. There

has here in it

famously. I love

what happens.

This is confession.

They taught me early

the basic truth:

bless me

for I have sinned.

26 December 2005

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for I will walk out in the mist of the morning  
cold but glad to be moving  
can it be a simpler gift than that but so much depending  
the weather and little traffic  
and the road is mine for a hour and the fog understands

26 XII 05

=====

peeling paper of the birch  
stream turbulent from melting  
snow and sheets of water  
slide across the road in rain

this is the downhill path  
what the morning  
sun crucified behind the clouds  
invisibly is trying to amend

*if I am lifted up I will draw*  
*all things to me*  
even the little river that finds  
its way to the big

river finds its way to the sea  
who rises in her time  
to me also, amnion, the  
weather of eternity.

26 December 2005

## MESSENGERS

Suppose they settled for me,  
those angels who come down to fetch a king  
or admiral or celebrity,  
ran out of time and took me instead.

Do angels run out of time?  
Check on this. And research  
the whole relationship of time and angels.  
And where do angels live?

Suppose they took me, *faute de mieux*,  
and carted me into the visible sky  
(else why bother) and turned me  
into a minor constellation: Anxiety,

or The Industrious Logopractor,  
they'll never get my name right  
but there I'll be, my penis, left eye  
right knee  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$  respectively

of this unknown constellation.  
Then by my faint light you'd see  
not much, but you would feel  
my influence on your astrology,

Venus tickling Mercury

when both in Pisces – it would feel like that,  
naughty but nice, inconsequential,  
a poem you read on the subway and forget.

26 December 2005

## BOXING DAY

Put everything away.

I didn't eat too much

or laugh too hard,

I hardly had

a holiday at all.

But with a life like mine

why would I want

an interruption?

That sounds proud

but I just mean thank you,

thank you Lama

and thank you Light

and thank you Lady

for all your gifts,

Light that lets me.