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Prelapsarian lawn roller
in the woods over the boundary line
for thirty five years. Whose?
I tried to use it once,
all full of rust holes, wouldn't
hold water, wouldn't roll.
But by God it holds the earth in place
right there on the border between red leaves and brown,
and my little hillside rising over the years
it seems to have made swell, slow. To sit
still long enough to make things change around you.
To live long enough to see things change.

1 November 2005

=====

So it's not till the night
that night came
and spoke that unmistakable
unwritable word
at the bottom of the belly
that told me This
is what you've been waiting for,
this dark arrival I am.

1 XI 05

=====

Anywhere else a man in the dark
is at peace with the dark or looking
for the light switch. But the lights
never go on. Day was a dream you had.
Night is the natural condition –
it is the second draft, the dark
erasure, the revision.

1 November 2005

=====

There is always someone waiting to explain the world.

I don't want that, I want you to ask me questions

so I can answer, so I can explain the world to myself.

Who else but I could know? Who else but you

could ask me to know what I know and say it?

1 XI 05

=====

The speed of night
count in desires
per hour, distances
measure in night fears.

1 November 2005

=====

I waited all day
for you with my
hands in your pocket.
You smiled
at the back of my mind.

1 XI 05

=====

Telling me all you can
walk over the wooden sidewalk
into my arms and the day begins.
We were cow people then, whores
and rustlers, we were vigilant,
knew how to find ghost towns
with empty rooms in dead hotels.
The suddenly it was now
and all the habits of our pleasure
got lost in other people's sunshine.
And the glare of music caught us too,
and things to look at. We were not ready
for so many things. Appetite
is all you need in this society.
We just wanted to lie on a rock and think.
You don't get born just once or twice —
every morning we inherit an unknown earth.

2 November 2005

triumphant and ashamed

--Ari Braverman

Triumphant means leaping up and down
the way you hop with happiness when...
or the way you jump up and down
before the altar of the Lord God
(King David did) or to praise
Lord Mars the God of Utterance
all kinds of outrage, remark
upon remark until the woman's pregnant,
the field sowed with barley, the word pronounced.

Ashamed means shame has come and
happened to you, shame means
shy I am and you did it to me,
shame means suddenly I wish to be not me
or be away from where I am when I say 'I am'

And *and* means and. In all my life
I never really understood was and means
but I guess it must mean something like all my life.

2 November 2005

=====

And on the Ninth Day
God erased Day Eight.

2 XI 05

=====

But the blue questionnaire

falls round his shoulders.

At each answer a star lights up

until the gentleman slips off his saddle

and stands on the ordinary ground.

Alumina, dung, worms, stones.

The horse trots away. More stars,

more answers. When he runs

out of questions the sun comes up.

Silence, his last star. Hours and hours

before anybody asks him anything again.

2 November 2005

=====

If they ask you
What day is this?
Say it is the Ninth
of Anything,
counting from water.

2 XI 05

SERMO

Man want job
job want empty
head this
asterisk town
one kindly bar
closed till noon
teetotal fun
by midnight waterfall
human skin not made
for loneliness™

we want a glass
even if it's empty—
learn Old Farsi
census of a dead city
in the cellars dig
an alphabet
waiting for a fish
a shadow waiting for a knife
Christ's cross a fish hook
to catch Leviathan
the priests said and Carl
Schmitt repeats
the church *is* the state
the bishop in the bush

sundown the gospel
breaks off mid-sentence
the young man
flees into the dark

the theme of nakedness persists
Scott's dreams in the long Antarctic dark
cancellation of all images: for weather
lives *inside* the mind

breakdown lane legal rush hour
put two bricks together call it architecture
bulldoze a house and call it urban planning
here I am a brick waiting for you
a hot brick come here glom yourself to me
tonal music of the Middle Occident
a bridge for Bruckner over a brook for Bach
then the electrocuted mind changes its portals
the gates fell down every time I heard this sound

and you were with me
mother of my minute
and I was just a dubious idea
clutched by a churlish philosopher
a cogito, a mere thing to give tenure to.

3 November 2005

=====

Exegi...

--Horace

Eggs or *gge*: a monumental
oval marble that poultry
farmers slip in baskets to tell
their laying hens Lay here:

this phony poem hard as a brick
I tuck down in these pages
to make the real poem come
and lie beside what only looks like it.

3 November 2005

=====

Caught? A fever catches you.

The camera smiles all over the table
and you start remembering deep things,
people you never knew. Fence posts
outside faded grey in rain, in your hand
poultry shears, why? Train goes by.
I never walked beyond the bend
in the track, don't know where
the tunnel goes. Maybe it keeps going
down into the earth with someone waiting,
somewhere it arrives. When will the moon
come back again? Stop talking to the sky.
Scrolls of the law. Your sister Dorcas naked
in her shawl nibbles cookies on the porch.
UPS truck shows up, bringing problems
in brown boxes. What is a man to do
with three right shoes and no friends?

3 November 2005

=====

Maybe sackcloth maybe rashes
cause the delicate maladjustment
of the skin, Lyme or dermatitis
time will tell, a medical matter
in short, *something forgotten by the mind*
into the body, the sly etiology
of how sickness comes. What force
aligns disorder, imbalance, thought?
Trace back to anger and desire,
the two pillars of the house of will.
It is the will that kills.

4 November 2005

EX ANIMA LVCIDA VOLVNTATIS FVLIGO

falls: from the soul in its candor the will
precipitates its own soot. The obscurity
that hides the world whenever we desire.

Slowly the explanation clears. Now
it is as obvious as a disease.

Because explanation also is a plague

and speaks against the necessary quiet
from which grows not just the rose.

4 November 2005

*"trying to get how a girl could turn
into a molten things and not burn."*

--quoted by Sophia Dahlin

I am trying to forget the girl
trying to forget how a girl could turn
into any sort of anything
a girl always seems to be
on the verge of turning into a thing
a boy does it a boy pushes here or there
and the girl is gone the thing is here.

*

Trying to get anything and not burn.
There is another thing here in the dark,
a woman made of lava creeping
towards me molten fiery from
the loins of a mother mountain over there,
always over there, the sea behind me
also in its own way dying from desire.

*

The temperate of the anterior
is a function of the pressure of the interior.
The melt is mild though she wears gold shoes,
the grasses are singed where she passes.
The man does what men are good for and runs away.

4 November 2005

=====

Let some small word decide it,
bar on Third Avenue, a girl playing
"Moon River" over and over – you fools
call this *time* and say you *remember* it.

There is no time to begin with.
And what you call memory
is a drunk trying to teach geography –
rivers all mixed up with mountains,

the economic products of the highlands,
laborious population of the cape.
And all the while you still hear the song.
You still taste the gin. Everything is always now.

4 November 2005

ORDINARY ARGUMENT

Oil of chamomile oil of marjoram
put me to sleep
beside your chest of drawers
where the cat sleeps.

There are so many things in your house,
one of them pretends to be a cat,
Chinese mugs full of Indian tea.
Windows full of weather.

If you didn't want to sleep with me tonight
why did you cover up the lawn with grass?

4 November 2005

=====

Go back home and write a spell
that puts the mice to sleep.

Let one star loom outside your window.

Now be silent. Till you suddenly
wake up and know that you were sleeping
all of it. Now send it to me.

4 November 2005