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grail break sticks

every part of it was sick

the runes the rapture

we look at the ss style

we look at the holocaust

some want the former

without the latter

can't have, every

part is sick, every aspect

a fulfillment of Western values

into corruption

the dead eagle

stinks.

every one who loves his country kills the world

every one who loves his brother kills a stranger

feeling justified is the sin against the Holy Ghost

9 January 2004

My friend Jesus. For if he is, he is to you. He is the one ever at your side. And what he *said* has to hear itself anew, void of two thousand years of institutional packaging, denaturing.

Premise: he is a lineage, not an institution. A diachronic *presence*, not a synchronic organization. By the great hypothesis he entered time. And time is where you find him, in the succession of words spoken, feelings encountered, loves exchanged, wrongs rued, a lineage of what talks in you.

As I understand it, Jesus began or instanced a lineage in Syro-European meditational practice.

This lineage has as its practices meditation, intimate discourse, the sacred text always the text on the way to becoming, the new word spoken, an equality of the sexes, an inward turn of mind, and outward turn of public gesture towards justice. It made little of, though it did not forbid, temple worship.

This lineage was opposed at the time of its inception by the Jewish institutions, and opposed ever after by the Christian institutions.

Because this lineage for the first time deal with earth. That earth belongs to all men and women, and all of us may seek to be at home here for a time. And God's share is our will to good, our wit, our intelligence, our disposition to imagine what is not yet the case, our 'soul.' Spark, imagination.

Earth is our only heaven. *On earth as it is in heaven* is the Emerald Tablet written afresh.

How could the Roman Empire (or its heir the Roman Church) understand, let alone tolerate, the immense difference of this Existenz-Jesus's claim. Heaven must be here, or nowhere.

9 January 2004

But to think about these things
kindly, never turning
to an anger we inherit from our enemies

Resist without anger
succumb without malice
the life-line must be kept intact

the words inside
he stands beside you speaking.

9 January 2004

BRAZEN cjn

But lifted at least the piece of brass
and lofted it the way they do
who mean to show one
small thing to the many

and there it rested in her hands
twisted, so that a fevered
onlooker would say it writhed,
it is alive, it takes

all the sunlight and swallows it
and this harsh desert suddenly
a sweet blue hermitage
and nobody dies

they thought, looking up at
this scrap of metal
left from a war in heaven
fallen now into her hands.

9 January 2004

Fallen into the wrong hands
this snow could swipe a city
but we were sleeping when it fell
and no one ventured to become
spokesperson of this blank
catastrophe, only a powder of it left
here and there amid stiff bushes
tight curled rhododendron leaves.
New built lumber things
crack in the cold. Fallen
into my hands a whole world
morning angry at nobody yet
speaking my own language the way
roses speak Yiddish in late spring.

10 January 2004

THE CAUSES

Don't let the woodpecker
forget the tree or iron
forget how to rust. They all
are counting on me
to forget, then my space
in the line will be taken
by some other word
with its own etymologies,
semantics, sound.
Not my poor roots.
And the whole epic
will quantumly change.
As every minute
it finds itself doing
even now in cold sunlight
the god doesn't show up.
Arjuna falls.

10 January 2004

Some words I say come out all wrong.
I mean their opposite, or not that, just
some other word 46° northeast of what I say
or cut from different wood. Beech
not birch. All words are wood,
be clear on that, the only lumber
some people get to work with or to burn.
The old printers carved big letters
out of maple to print their headlines with
and we're no different, wooden language
the louder we speak, oversimplified
philosophy or outright lies to make you
love me, what else does anybody care
about, love love love, Foucault's asshole
Sartre's cigarette, the love that carves
or brands the poor runic alphabet
deep into the practice of our desire.
No wonder silence is the door of mind.
And of what wood is that door made?

10 January 2004

Suppose we counted everything.
Suppose the sunlight, pouring through a blue
glass flower vase full of gaudy orange
gerbera cast blue light reflections
– shadows turned inside out – on the paper
the little boy writes his first letter on
from his grandparents' house to his mother
back in Tonawanda – would he not
ever after seek for the way the light
and the letters were linked when his
barely legible baby fist made the blue
color come sprawl through his words?
I write through color, or only
through color can sense be made –
is that what he thinks? Now he counts
the words he's written to his mother.
Then counts the spaces in between.
They matter too, he decides,
otherwise everything would look like this.
Spaces count. The blue light
is still there. There are no answers
in the world, only numbers. And one
light that won't ever leave him alone.

10 January 2004

DUTCH EARLY BREAKFAST PIECES

want my wall. The gleam
in butter, the luster
of a herring's muscle
laid out on a winter morning,
Judean desert of a slab
of cracked wheat bread.

I care about you
because you came after
in time for me.
The saints were all gone
by the hour I was born.

Or no, maybe they had
hidden themselves
in ordinary things.
Saint Lemonslice.
Saint Piece-of-Cheese.

2.

The painters knew

if we learned how
to worship with our eyes
the yummy circumstance
of house and table,
the property of reverence
would stay keen in us,
kinsmen, and our appetites
would guru us to good
just following our eyes.
The sheen of the loaf's
slick crust. Inside
the ornate pewter flagon
schemes the hidden wine.

3.

Painting a picture of a thing
is always a religious act.
This is the terrible secret
hidden in Western art.
Or what Clara Peeters must
have meant with her oversize
hunk of bread, her delicate
little fish. These things

we eat incarnate us. Every
meal gives birth to us again.
And every sight of any thing
seen clear and held
in mind is God.

11 January 2004

I think I want to be your Dutch interior.

I'm beginning to doubt the days themselves—
isn't there a day after Saturday
before Sunday comes to start the count again?

I walk down the avenue of the lost day,
the letters lost from the alphabet, the number
they forgot to count

and the seven days they bother to insist on
get out of sequence with the actual
nature of the days themselves, unweeked,

clocked by a different calendar altogether.

For the mercy of the Sabbath we pay
with an iron schedule all our lives.

12 January 2004

NO HURRY

No her to hurry for, the boy thought. And his love-gloom parted for a moment and let in a vague but welcome relief from adoration, pale like the undying sky above the cemetery on the hill.

12 January 2004

THE ONE

All the other children
were holding their ears and shrieking
to shut that music off inside

but you were listening.

Cities are ships
but only rarely ocean finds them,

you were locked inside
a mechanism that didn't move
though built to move

but you were listening.

All the other children
went to the ocean with their parents

but you waited it out right here
listening, on this ship of yours,
waiting for the sea to come

and come it did, the silence
rolled back in one day

and you were the first to hear it

and the ocean was a kind of stone, the beauty.

13 January 2004

ON THE WAY TO

1.

Night no end.

A flare

in the face – red

blood press

heat against out

there where

other is.

Autrui. The dream about one
the goal or *τελος* your liberty or

the other is the one for whom
the door was made, and when
you turn your back on the door
it is a road? The road
is for the other but who
is my other I thought was you?

Can you *be* the other?

Does the other exist only
on the other side of what I can name?

2.

I want to be a staircase in your house.

A girl is sitting halfway up
a man is climbing.

At the second landing a shadow comes
that could be anything
large, a man, a camel,

I want to be a photograph of your staircase
inside a photograph of my house
and photos of people sitting or moving on the stairs.

The girl is so bored
but stairs are always interested,
always on their way up or down

hailing and farewelling. I want
to be going out and coming in at once,
can I, will you let me at last

touch and relinquish, Baroque
music for small violins,
the thing that makes me dangerous and weird

is that I am never bored –
isn't that the problem between us,
everything interests me?

3.

But it has to be your house.
You are either the other
or you lead to the other.

Or thinking about you
I draw close to the other,
or studying the curves of your shadow

I seem to discern the rondure of the other
and when I knock on your door
and you don't answer or are not home

I can hear the song of the other
rapped out by my own knuckles
hummed by the wood of your door

chanted by the silence
of the empty room,
your door is the other

or the other is the noise inside my head you make.

14 January 2004

OUTSIDE THE PALACE

Casting the spell of such relationship
as the snow knows, can't even say it,
specifies disaster or encomiast of loss,

don't we need Pindar for the losers too,
we sad Viennese white-shinned runners?
O who listens anyhow my talk

my talk the Kapuzinergruft of
all these imperial desires
where the emperors and empresses are buried

a name is sepulchered inside the mouth.

15 January 2004

THE MAN FROM BROOKLYN

How many blunderers ashore
sea keeps bringing – how few
the waves achieving
change, or do they all do

and I just not see?

And who am I to see? we said
when the house was just
beginning to speak

between the succulent grasses
I fed to the lions west of Nostrand
and the Feast of Tabernacles
when harvest happened on fire escapes

how personal it all lets you be
when you are willing to answer when
the kind darkness keeps saying my name
all the weird brittle sleeps of love,

who knows who you might miss,
ocean, if you go one sleeping?

16 January 2004