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## WALLED GARDEN

Caught among the wild berries  
Ficino begins to question them  
lightly, summerly, in his own  
native language – the speech  
you talk to your mother in,  
never quite natural, always  
a little bit full of asking –

and why are the leaves of strawberries  
*fragole* cast in gold to form the bracket  
of a duke's coronet, or these blue  
plebeian huckleberries, what makes them  
so good for eyesight? Or is it only  
men's eyes that are made keener?

And his eyes are not blue. Maybe the grey  
the Ligurian Sea casts into the pale  
farawayness of some eyes. Maybe hazel.  
They are looking around now for the gardener  
who contrives such riddles for him  
out of the simple-seeming earth and

seeds and such – would they germinate  
without the mind's intention? If we were not  
here to reap would they still grow?

*Who are the world in me or I in her?*

he dreams to answer.

Now it is sleepy as a bee inside the light,  
everything humming, fulfilling its nature  
so he supposes these questions are  
the fulfillment of human essences  
and he has as much right here as the gardener  
so –suddenly it seems– even  
more right than the raspberry caning  
up from sand though it seems even in  
Platonism presumptuous to say so.

5 February 2004

=====

*for PLW*

The long skull of Thomas Browne  
waited in some meadow till  
it was pure bone, pure brown bone  
and could speak to us of things  
the flesh forgets and bone remembers.

I sit across from it now and my  
own hard skull begins to feel  
the buzz of not so alien vibration.

So I sent the Browne skull on to you.  
I don't want to know yet  
what such bones know, have a trip  
on me among its visions if you dare.  
I am still of meat. And hence  
have no wish to remember.

6 February 2004

## SKULL

All the mistakes a human makes  
go on living in his skull.  
Afterwards, the skull is shaped  
by such, as well as by his virtues,  
but all made abstract and very strong  
ineluctable as pale arithmetic  
dry and forceful like magnetism  
or a light bulb far off in some desert.  
That's why a skull becomes a drinking cup  
to slake that terrible certainty  
we ignorantly share. And if you drink  
from it you too will eat those potencies.  
Or bang the drum you make from bone  
and let the pattern rattle into air.

6 February 2004

=====

Bones in the body  
not the information  
exchanged  
but the exchange of it  
the nexus of our needs  
spoken, moment  
in momentum,  
not what we give  
each other but that  
we have hands.

6 February 2004

=====

I am distracted by what I mean.

6.II.04

=====  
You can't write about me anymore,  
you have drunk the last of my wine  
and I have closed my river.

My yellow morning fog is not for you  
and I have stuffed cotton  
into the small church bell of my heart  
so you can pull on me all you want  
and you won't hear any answer  
belling or howling over your valleys,  
*nyet*. Your sin is inexcusable:

you live in me as if I were someplace else,  
you use me for what anybody could do—  
friendship, conversation, love.

There's much more than that  
to being accurate. Accurate means always,  
means our tongues exchange their mouths,  
means your bones are impatient for my flesh,  
means there must be madness that we risk  
and we fall through each other always  
like sunlight through cathedral windows  
casting magic colors on the dumb stone.



7 February 2004

=====  
But they keep changing our address  
and the house stays where it is  
and we stay inside it while the street  
changes and the numbers shift  
but still the moon the other night  
almost full before the snow  
knew where to find us,  
and the sun has our number  
and calls sometimes when she remembers,  
for we are the nice old parents of the world.  
Everything comes from us and everything leaves home  
and some day everything comes back  
bringing that strange smile of matter they call a word.

7 February 2004

## TWENTY MILLION SOLDIERS

my uniform is pleasing  
because of color gold and trim  
I sweat profusely  
in my tunic  
sometimes I die.

I am a colonel I have a piece of paper  
to remind me, I have a knife  
from Burma stained with gore  
but whose blood I forget.

Enemies are so undependable  
now white, now yellow.

When I was little I was fond of guns,  
later of bows and arrows, I really  
liked arrows. Then sticks and staves.

Now words. Receding always  
to the simplest weapons, the weakest,  
the ones that kill by truth and love  
and other feints of feeling  
before which even the strongest  
men and women falter or actually fall.

7 February 2004

## SUNT LUMINA

At night to see by only  
carrot light or cucumber  
glisten in between space  
ratcheting deep maybes into  
the urn that's only there for

and who does shove it deeper  
-mystery loves trumpery-  
but this feels that and know  
for all knowing is a sort of feeling

Rahab asks for empathy  
beneath the crumbling wall  
names that are newish  
we also hear in elegant harlotry  
*ostendebit nemo se in*  
*privilegio balnei aut*

motor no turn here no borrow  
these poor girls scalced by sorrow

suddenness beneath the sole  
hurt whose toe be there there  
with your furious sympathy

aubade on such a sandy plain  
starsucker she's asking for it

what if one life consists in all  
nobody anywhere but her  
she was born with the sun  
inside her moon her friend  
computes her numbers but  
light hurries through blue glasses  
eliminating algebra forever

let the mind think of something else—  
old music but the one  
who thought it out is dead  
long years the melody breaks  
rocks narcissus bulbs forced  
among sea pebbles all a  
person is is water trapped in air

but what kind of answer is that  
politicians wearing flower pots  
oniony bases of narcissus bulbs  
rest in half an inch of water  
before the rocks just keep  
drinking like a mountain top  
sugar in the jar salt spilled  
on your lap they say old pennies  
in the water keeps roses longer  
that was the Sunday I gave you up  
and said goodbye in such a little  
voice only the finches heard it  
pecking at the thistle seed.

8 February 2004

## PROGRESS

Lending things and leaning on bells  
then hearing things and wondering  
have they come back at last and seeing  
nothing but the valley opening when  
you open its door you try to begin

Now the doctor asks but who  
did you give it to and who do  
you think will bring it back  
are they the same or if they are not  
why do you think one person if  
it is a person would perform  
the action due from another  
person if that person is also a  
person or even if not ?

It is a hard silence to negotiate  
this one you find all around  
inside you when a doctor speaks

what an animal I am you think



and try experimentally to say waf or chaf  
thinking to sound like a cornered fox

but foxes and such are smarter than you are  
when it comes to silences and getting away  
this all comes from talking Waf waf  
you say and pretend you're coughing

coughing things out and breathing in quick  
then waiting and hoping things take  
care of themselves and then things come back  
carrying whoever borrowed them on them  
the one you're too frightened to remember.

9 February 2004

## CHANGING THE AGENDA

for no reason a dove did it  
or the friend, the friend  
you trusted with your violin

is that what's called  
you hold it to your throat  
and press down on it hard

until it sings, the friend  
you trusted with your music,  
your download queen

your fire escape on August  
nights you lived your life  
by the light of her moon

which in your vanity you  
supposed your own sunlight  
basked back at you by her

-basked? agenda? dove?

I think we fool ourselves  
again, the moon has set

you never meant it anyhow  
love songs were your tools  
of non-commitment

a strange little tuneful thing  
halfway in between  
a skeleton key and a violin.

9 February 2004

*In commento:* Any door is good enough for a skeleton key, which opens any body. What do you do then? Play the violin. Press hard. Do the same thing over and over again. Make cooing sounds. Fly away. The best authorities don't think bask is used that way.

=====

Nine minutes doing nada.

It was 10:09 then 10:18.

In between I thought

about what *analogy* could really mean.

9 February 2004

=====

Can it release the moment  
from holding me? How could it,  
music stammers all alone  
over there in the corner of the room,  
all it ever does is make sounds  
and what good are they?  
Can you eat tone?

Too many anyhow, too many precisions.

9 February 2004

=====  
Cold grandee afraid of wheat  
such principled decides chaparral  
then translate by maquis the other  
side of Vesta is sumptuous  
unpierced not uncaressed her  
give the poor thick tragedy to eat  
to humiliate the opposition  
a tongue licking wounds is too  
busy to dissent or advocate revolt  
hear a moan it must be wind or  
fossil fuel all our wretchedness  
was set in place by Rome  
but this is comedy a stack  
of something elses impersonating men  
and some few women too though most  
of the women still are women in  
this dybbuk travesty religion.

10 February 2004

=====

The accord is waiting for the design. The design is waiting for the little boy with ink in the palm to stop talking to the not so little girl with her mind on something else. Something else is waiting for a clear channel to communicate with Earth. Earth is waiting for a French-speaking Indonesian heart specialist to announce a new use for bitter melons. Bitter melons are waiting for a little man to water them since for several days nothing has been heard from the Rain God. The Rain God is waiting for everybody to be asleep so he can form into mist and settle on the steep golden roof of the tope by the bay. The bay is waiting for nothing, since everything is can imagine is present inside it at this very moment, inside and all around and all above, just like you thinking this but also that, and that, and all those.

10 February 2004