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LUNATISM

Driving back from Albany last night
we saw the drift of moon
gibbous as Rigoletto and like him
baritone, cripple-haughty,
heavy in mist and upright beautiful
over Church's fancy Moorish house
and the ruby-tipped radio towers by the short-cut,

don't distract me, I mean the moon
not an opera, not a song, not an old painted
and his coloristic tricks, not a strange
exotic thing but the most familiar
sight of all, the most common spectacle
on this whole planet, the moon
that everyone has ever seen, the one thing
neither groaning nor gendered
not a boy and not a girl

everyone on earth can see it
and look at as long as they like
with no damage to their eyes,
o no the moon will never hurt you,
it's not a friend and not an enemy,
not a who but sometimes a when,
what are you, the one person

on earth everybody knows?
Seeing the moon is so powerful
because when I look at the moon
I become every person who ever saw the moon
and I am everybody who ever ever was
and am at peace with all my ever selves
and the moon stares right back at me, at us,
at ease, no propaganda,
there is nothing to negotiate between us,
two common specimens at peace in the night.

11 March 2004

POPUL VUH

different delicate amazes me
images from inside broken bones

those people
don't mean us
at all, they don't
forgive us
don't even hate us

they live inside colors
we will never understand

because we think color is a property of things
but they know it is the mother
of everything
the thing comes from its color,
the fact falls out of the feeling

color is logic and dictionary

Gerhard Dorn whom Olson called
William knew this but we forgot
so Zak Kitnick messing around with Jeff Koons
knows more about cosmology than he admits.

11 March 2004

=====
Suppose we found a fossil on the lawn –
who would we be?

She says, Don't you ever get tired of
trying to 'we' us?

I am me and you are you and
what kind of fossil is it anyhow?

A shape as if of spine, or comb, or flowing hair
streaking on grey rock

I stumbled over and set loose
as I was walking on the muddy lawn

a stone, a stone with pictures in it.

But not of us.

Of course not, we are biology, not physics.

Don't be so sure. The world is very old.

But we are new in it
and holy as spring mud.

11 March 2004

A TULIP GROWING IN A LEAFLESS TREE

A tulip growing in a leafless tree
not growing there, a pale depending,
what happens when you throw out in the night
the flowers that made you happy day by day
smiling turkish in the dining room or
dutch at breakfast.

Things hang
where they fall when you throw them away.
And in this way the world was made
by nobody and everybody little by little
discarding what they no longer loved
to puzzle and console the rest of us.

12 March 2004

ERSATZ INDOLENCE

(a fire inside)

(striving to be calm

nonsense advise me)

(and no one listens)

olive oil flaming in the frying pan

ink runs down your arms

business business

full of seeds of agitation

(I lost the Latin, *semina* something)

and the blue bird on the springy branch

dreams the shadow of a falcon overhead

war comes from the tension of trying to be at peace

maybe better hate your neighbors like the Swiss

who mobilize their troops forever but never fight.

12 March 2004

DOVES

Big mourning doves outside
courting and proposing
with such little steps
to conjugate
the secret verbs of springtime
right here before me
the whole morning is a ritual

In all religions worship seems to pause at noon:
ritual, then *something else*, then the Angelus
rings out, twilight, the Queen of the Sabbath
lights her candlewicks and evening prayer
drones on. But what is that *something else*
after lunch and before the evening comes?
The calm of ordinary time, a few hours
of pure being void of becoming.
No ritual, just rest. Siesta of a faun
and his dreams, and how he wakes from them
ready for the last sweet light.
Before the prayers begin again. The Vatican
is angry at the afternoon. Freedom
after lunch when everyone's an atheist.

12 March 2004

IN CERTAIN AGITATIONS

these answer those
some say every
clock hand lets
unparallel is know
spring board empty
parsnips chopping block
east on main
some say same
more time now
few day do
translate as me
often many too
seldom swimming dry
organize some answer
west again later
overt fashion ages
sure before breakfast
sometime one two
sometimes two three
too many said
too many things
too many things
too many things
then suddenly new
live in money

then suddenly now
house is how
determined over silence
we have to have a thing to hang our horror on
house is now
when now comes
we come too
because we can
they can say
some say more
is more true
some times lie
all lies tell
what tells itself
all true things
gives itself airs.

12 March 2004

AND EVEN THIS

this could also be the barrel
whose bottom I get to scrape
every night before the insolence of Sleep
my haughty nursemaid takes my words away.

12 March 2004

NIGHT TALKS

1.

And there were rumors all around her,
fluttering like her white flirty skirts
all Memphis and wild times
when all time uncoiled in afternoons
when the sun challenges to outdo its heat.

2.

And is this yet the bottom of the hour
Singapore short story and pale diluted sky
like a drink somebody left on the bar last night
and we have to deal with now.
Do it. Drink the sky.
There is no other absolution.

3.

But what about this?
Who asks for me
among the sleepers?
Who half wakes and calls me?
I smell lilies in the dining room.
After so many years I am alive again,
simple as casino, in love with ginger ale.

12 March 2004

CANNIBAL HOUR

Palimpsests for all religions –
scrape the recent names away

and read the real name
of the god you praise.

Since then I have slept beneath the vine
drunk as Noah on a million daughters.

12 March 2004

=====

You know by now that
water is a kind of stone.
You know that from the coldness
heaviness the color—
only diamonds have such color.
Somehow this stone
has to run inside your life.
You can't live a day without it.
Somehow you learn how to take it in.

12 March 2004

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Earth, earth, pestle

pounding wood

says the calendar

the days pound us again

the days sift us later

we are ground fine

toasted barley

wet with tea, scoop and eat

the day pounds grain

what is the mortar

in which that pestle works

rammed upright on our wheat

the brief identity of each

into the redeeming mass,

is it mind, is it me?

What's left of anyone

when the day is done?

Only an idiot could think
he wakes with the same
person he slept with

we are harvested every morning fresh
full of dreams
they tell us happened yesterday

the lie we call remembering.

Poetry is that Alzheimer condition where only the line you're in is real.
“Language” poetry is the apt music from and for our time, born from and
speaking to our challenged neurology. Autism at one end and Alzheimer's
at the other.

A to A, never reaching even B – let alone Omega – even the initials tell us –
all the poem happens just in the happening – Clark Coolidge showed the
way – and then I found I had written *there is nothing to remember* – nothing
to predict – just bare luminosity – charged *notice* of what's passing – and
then another thing is passing – and that's it – nothing but what happens now.

It's all about now – the Now generation is the Alzheimer's generation – of
course we lose our memories – there is nothing to remember – only the
loveliness of lines of poems going past – moments of pleasure – ads –
soundbites – video highlites – a glimpse of her song – lies of politicians –

and these lies turn true since they seem true when they're spoken and no one remembers – just make up the news – no one will notice – and if they do it won't matter – o Jason Blair of all those who know your name how many know which of your stories were true and which were made up? – do you? – is there a difference? – just this word I speak now

this moment is my only argument.

13 March 2004

=====

Imagine this, recidivist –
a hurricane without wind or water.

Earth inside earth
trying to understand

the simple thing you tell me.
Somebody wants somebody again.

13 March 2004

=====

for Pat Smith

Is it this after all
or stand-up bass
in Flint's far cafes
a fragment that we need
to work into the mosaic of the word

the one that speaks us?

I think so.

It is a matter
of our hearing.

Because thinking is a very old religion
but its god is still not born.

13 March 2004

=====

If I were sitting here wondering about the weather
there would be another
an sly ombudsman of the heart
who'd tell me
not on your life, it's not the frost it's her
the one you're always
having in your head,
the diamond lady of the demons,

she's talking to you. Do not confuse
your steady-state anxieties with the word
of the gods coming to see you
and going about their business in your mouth

and see what comes.
This is an emergency.

14 March 2004