

4-2004

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The squall of light  
ill-curtained by windless  
soft embeds the morning in  
something other than itself  
no name proposes—

certainly you were listening,  
certainly the devious hours  
so plentiful with waking  
maps a journey for you  
across the lawn, the smug trees  
all set to go, this church  
of air dissolving worklessly  
all partisan pieties

and only you  
girl friend of the particular  
bend down and pat the earth  
your quiet little dog.

Wet fingers.  
All that night left behind it  
caught in the momentum of your skin.

## **AGGRAVATE THE OBVIOUS**

so it leaves behind it chorales  
of unexpected, resonating  
in random tumblers on the table

and the window chatters with reflections  
you never heard before. Strange  
to be so alone, a pioneer  
of the dining room, this space  
becoming anybody's guess

and even the tulips in their Tuscan vase  
are more like ruddy faces watching you  
than proper Turks though they do keep speaking  
a language that sounds like poetry  
among the vowels and otherwise like cars  
braking on gravel. But who wants poetry?  
This is now, no Ottomans, no odes.

Something has changed and everything  
knows it, not just you.  
The whole house is paranoid with light.

4 April 2004

=====

Eager to demur  
a bird song  
inside the house,  
who, who is saying  
so many things

no end of hearing?  
I have listened  
to this book  
all the days  
of my life and  
sometimes written  
down what it said

everything we declare's  
a footnote to it,  
a glad scholion  
we shout to sing.

O Torah in the least  
of things unceasing  
voice arriving new.

4 April 2004

=====

I'm not sure I can tell a voice from a book.  
When you remember something  
it's all you, all inside you, all wet as ever  
with language. And everybody knows  
language comes from nowhere.  
What I hear when no one is speaking  
is constant information  
also. It keeps speaking  
and speaking and writing things down  
using this or other instruments  
testing how much it yearns to tell us.

4 April 2004

=====

Can't you hear?

The habit  
of have it

the cave  
of coming home?

Cowbird, little  
Carmelite,  
nun at my feeder,

Saint Theresa  
smiling  
in the heart of every  
seed

listless  
the glad morning.

4 April 2004

=====

*for Keith Waldrop's Jacob Delafon*

All the evidence points to now  
but by the time I study it  
the culprit's gone.

04.04.04

=====

Swans die the whole music –  
Vera Karalli in Evgeni Bauer's 1916 film  
spent the whole swan music on her toes  
*sur les pointes*  
the tension of the human  
body upright holding  
mapped onto the ballerina  
who holds herself uprighter  
she is by exaggeration  
the parody and truth  
of our own striving  
against some dim remembrance  
of animal condition,  
the earth rebuked, old gravity unsaid.

4 April 2004



***friend* day they say**

daring to know

time's nature

narrowly spoken

some hours of daylight

some of night

I read my Vedas

in the everywhere.

4 April 2004

=====

They see with all parts of their bodies,  
they sometimes sing.  
Hearing them, composers have transcribed  
much curious seemingly human music  
(Debussy's *En bateau*, Brahms's fourth ballade)  
that really is from them.  
Some of us sometimes pray to them.  
Often they are pink or pale.  
When they are with you  
you don't feel strange.  
That's how you know.

4 April 2004

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I am whom humble  
in the face of when  
but all the other queries  
plait their tails in vain  
because I do not know

*sheypa* means know  
in Tibetan, don't know  
in French, who answers  
when no one asks

that is the one  
I claim I am  
listening website  
vague music or

frontier of the other  
act of cognition  
not to know is  
also knowing

Rue de Fleurus in rain  
the park behind you  
paradeisos in grasp  
duck into the bookshop

on the corner, cities  
have streets, streets  
make corners,  
here is Rabelais

tell how to live,  
here is your mother  
how silent resilience  
how mind this matter.

5 April 2004

**(Parenthetical, #9)**

It wasn't suicide  
it was punctuation,  
wasn't blood  
that stanching a thirst  
for nakedness

wasn't crucifixes  
that stabbed the wall  
so that the sun bled down  
and woke this child

I have stared at the wall  
where I began  
and felt the dream again  
that slept me then

*fragrant with because*  
even in those blue days  
*crushed* clouds, *bare*  
intelligence

ranged like slates on the roof  
in rain,

what were you asking  
when I began to answer,  
I am shaken to know  
how much I want to tell you

5 April 2004

## PHILOMETRY

In certain amplitudes  
in this cluster  
or plexus of what feels  
(\**hrd*, the heart)  
is a bird not too small  
fluttering to wake up or  
about the size of a prairie hawk  
in a five gallon jug  
to get out, the  
heart is always trying to escape,

to get to you, *i fideli* said,  
the faithful ones of love's religion,  
Durante's elder brothers,  
if love could  
the heart could  
and the bone prison could yield its Casanovas

never, always a wakeful jailer  
in the works, a sweet sunrise  
(now) on a cold morning  
to say "Be still.  
Beauty rescues us from love."

And when I complained the room had no desk  
the concierge explained I'm sorry,  
you have to ax for one  
and the girl at the desk  
in uniform repeated, next time just ax,  
and the glory of their gilded stucco  
was a diamond on an old man's hand

that quality we share with poetry  
of being gorgeously sad,  
Durante's teacher Wirgils  
with his sobbing Libra voice  
licking the sleek buttocks of the beautiful  
always on the brink of leaving,  
*ces beaux départs*  
that make the hawk  
hide its head under wind and  
yet there will always be flying,  
who does it,  
always be adoration and a door,  
the heart at morning.

6 April 2004



## LATE LUNCH

Would the other, less distinguished, thing  
let them do something ordinary just for once,  
to roll down Warren, “a long queer  
street” towards the common river  
searching for lunch but who listened?  
It was the dog’s fault they were refused,  
some places just have policies. At last  
they found one with tulips in the window,  
a workman’s chophouse in the afternoon,  
romantic between lunchtime and tea,  
that served him lamb and two small  
omelettes for her, scraps for the poor  
nasty little dog. Sometimes hard  
to distinguish well-done fat of ornamental  
bacon from the edges of the chop itself,  
the way histories mingle in the mouth  
of the moment when someone tries  
to tell more than he understands.

6 April 2004

[They are Edith Wharton and Henry James, having lunch in Hudson.]

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I always worry going down steep hills.  
It's easy for the horse but how about the carriage?  
Doesn't it press forward irresistibly  
against the horse, the passive suddenly active,  
the whole equipage lunge down towards the river?  
Last night I dreamed of an electric fire  
but somehow found a green garden hose that put it out.  
That's not supposed to happen. And the river  
is not full of smashed landaus and dead horses.

6 April 2004

# Herrenvolk

The Mister Race is also means,  
tribe of gentlemen and their chattels –  
womenfolk, first victims of every imperium.

6 April 2004

## GOING BACK HOME

*after Jenny Hendrix*

When in the season of cathedrals  
I hear my heart do something funny  
like a train over the bridge

[B train, Manhattan Bridge]

I begin to understand the dark, rough,  
unpolished stone that lives down there in me,  
allow me to be vague, somewhere

at the bottom of all life I know I'm scared.  
Ashlar. Cornerstone. Unmasoned altar  
as built beyond Jordan. The cathedral

stands next to the Masonic Temple,  
both of them inscribe their stuff in me,  
line after line and then the corner,

[Lafayette & Vanderbilt]

corner after corner till I get to  
Grand Army Plaza, green of trees, black  
panthers crouching in old bronze

black except where on their haunches  
a million children's hands hand  
rubbed a bright curve clean –

this is the corona of the sun.

6 April 2004