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SOMETHING WAITING

a cross

at a roadside – who?

Morning is a question

the rest of the day

expands it, does not answer it

Question follows question

enough for a good

conversation

eighty, ninety years

This is the measure called

relax, it all keeps going

close your eyes

and rest in the canoe

No name river big woods

on land couples

meet and break up

cowbirds come and eat seed

Take it easy

the cross

is at the crossroads

but there is no road
you are not walking

Nothing says there is an answer
when you get excited
it just changes the conversation
watch your blood pressure
young beavers play along the bank.

17 April 2004

BERLIOZ

Agitprop of orchestra.

For all the sorrow

nothing sounds like denial.

Everything is more.

It dreams

and dreams us

into itself. Who is us?

The dream folds over

upon itself.

This is nothing

that was called music.

All its greatness comes from being wrong.

Wrong about itself and right about us.

It breaks its own rules

to come forwards

always to us. To touch us.

[“...from being wrong.” Wrong like the Funeral and Triumphal Symphony, wrong like the Eroica and the Fifth, wrong like Mahler, wrong like Salome. “Wrong about itself and right about us” – this is the opposite of academic music, Haydn.]

17 April 2004

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But it isn't much sleeping
this yellow, or this,
bird?

Not sure,
reflection in window of oak table,
touch me.

I have been knocking on the wrong door.

17 April 2004

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

Trying to be queer as daylight
men offer each other handshakes
as if they were rich and were giving
each other cigars. Thus is Asia

brought close. Avenues are wide,
streets narrow. No other distinction
seems required. Then we light
our imaginary cigars by the *flame*

of difference – other people walking by
who are not men, or not these men.
Women are candles. Dogs are horses
dragging invisible carriages forever

in which their real masters smugly sit
surveying the reassuringly endless city.
The street chased me here, I thought
I was safe in the woods but they found me,

chink of bronze coin at the soup-boiler's stall.

17 April 2004

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I would ask the sullen theater to rehearse
broken branches from my lawn –
find out what play they've fallen from
and whose hands they are
that grapple in my dirt.

These sleepy actors half out of costume
slay me with their pertinent asides–
are they in the same dream I have?

I'm tired of hearing so much money
I want to spend the war right here
it said and I got scared
thinking of how metal bleeds.

17 April 2004

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Sulky ladies. Chipmunks.

The simple pleasures one by one
and never quite all the way to two,

eccles cakes and soft white cheese
and hands busy where they ought not go.

17 April 2004

BEESWAX

for Levi

Unfiltered beeswax
dark here and there
with remembered life.
Time's autoclave
sterilizing *alles*.

Today I went below the earth
and found the earth.
I bring it home on my shoes
and here, the *wooden tablets*
of the poor, to write
on these, to leave a trace
of passage,

when I was young
they still said *shoon* sometimes
but they smiled when they said it
as if they had a different kind of feet.

17 April 2004

CASQUE

A gold
one. Around a cranium
no description available.

This was the crime,
to be mine.

On the Quai des Enfers
imaginary policemen
interview rooms full of paper.
Stern eye of a judge
reading a helpless document.

Everything that ever
happened to you
came out of a book.

Did they tell you that
before you learned to read,
when the birds outside
your window still had no names
and all the blue flowers were
just flowers that happened
to be blue?

Then it
started happening,
the book took over
and what a book it was.
Even now when I hold you
in my arms I can
hear the pages turning.

18 April 2004

1681: SONATA in F, H.I.F.von Biber

The sound
who holds my hand
the brittle
bones of me

knee replacements
violins
how far the beach is
but a gull cry shows the way

can I find my way to the dark
and when I closed my eyes
all the stars were blue
and filled the sky

patterns unfamiliar
organ and violin
the red towers of the Liebfraukirche
always remind me of

something I don't know what
my bones maybe
my fingers in the air
testing the wind

or ordering two beers
to be brought to me outdoors
by a tree squeaking in the wind
I fear the branch will fall

before I have drunk my glass and gone.

18 April 2004

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Have I listened enough
or is the day still waiting to begin?
Long lines of cars are headed this way
from the doomed city,
everything wants to be a flower
but what name shall I give?
I was born there
between the willow and the submarine.
Zeppelins, fezzes, blue hydrangeas—
these things I love and who would take
them from me and who will bring them back?
Some things grown only near the sea.
It is Sunday morning in Queen Anne's Square,
the hotel guests over their kippers contemplate
nurses having a smoke in the austere park.
I think that God is nothing but a window.

18 April 2004

MYOPIA

Daffodils
very yellow
and when they
fly away
they're finches.

18 April 2004

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A rage of doubt unlocked the quiet light.

The button clings to the shirt

the shirt clings to the back

and what does the man cling to?

A world is connection—

Obey the law say the great gods

the old ones, who saw what you do

but could not tell what goes on

inside of you. The new ones know,

o these new young gods, they speak

inside you as if they knew the place

or worse, as if the place were theirs.

Or is it better? The Jesus, the Horus,

the Buddha especially, all this knowing

and loving till there's no place you can hide.

Like trying to keep birds from noticing the sky.

18 April 2004

POSTCARD

This is my body I'm writing to you from.
You know what it feels like,
and some of the places it has been.
I wish I could show you a picture
of me now, I mean inside me,
the cliffs and seacoast, high surf,
the gulls screaming out at you, a calm
lighthouse halfway to the horizon
flickering with information. A land bird
overhead and very near, a hawk maybe,
suddenly dives down. Suddenly here.

18 April 2004

<late> =====

The mark of it on the wall
as if a bird has burnt there
but how could that be?

Oceans left me dry,
muffled with interpretation–
Melusina's scales!

She wore water as her clothes
every stream on earth
part of her wardrobe.

I stand stiff-kneed by the Sawkill
pouring out all this
misinformation –

bring it to her, water,
she is waiting for me
always, she wants me

to keep talking, to be wrong.

18 April 2004

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All the disturbances align.
A rock. Something to drink.
Take off your wet clothes
this is the desert we will dry you.

Épreuve, ordeal. Trial
by fury, angry innocence—
the heart is like an unripe pear
sheltered in pure sunlight—
bring me the water you wring from your clothes,
by its taste I'll tell my future.

Grow it, grow it, under daylight
as if under ground, the priests are coming,
you have to know the moment
between its turning ripe and when they pluck it
cut down the tree, scatter salt on you and me,
they are angry at the earth, they too
are innocent, they count the syllables
in a secret language they rob from your breath.
It is all sand now, figures in the sand.
We are deciphered.

19 April 2004

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS TAKEN BY VIOLENCE

Ask your priest about this
but I think what it means
is that the natural goes nowhere

nature is the program
that gives life and aborts it
you'll never get there by natural means

by nature we just go to sleep.
So there is some other animal we can ride,
Sodom stallion or Cathar mule or the Old Man's ox,

yes, the ox with no attitude,
the pale endurer,
wipe that smile off your mind and follow me.

19 April 2004

OUT OF EDEN

The first door
was the sin

Every door
is a transgression

19 April 2004

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You could have tried being
but what would you be leaving,
losing? Any choice is terrible,
like a voice you don't recognize
calling your name. Or do you?
Is it the one of all voices
you don't want to hear?
And you can't name her
even now, years after
whatever happened
happened. The grain
of things, you think, grain
of wood, of leather,
pores of an animal
still clear in your shoes,
you walk in its life still.

19 April 2004