

5-2004

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## **ALL I ASK IS RAIN**

All I ask is rain  
all I ask is wind  
all I ask is cold  
all I ask is fog  
or even mist  
all I ask is weather  
you can feel, weather  
that makes me feel  
someone is talking  
and talking to me  
rubbing against me  
telling the new truth

all I ask is weather that tells the truth  
all I ask is the truth

the cold wet morning loves me

3 May 2004

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But I was trying to say a different thing  
and I got in the way

something about me instead  
a kind of semi-permanent plantation  
some other planet set out here  
they could keep in touch with  
and use to send their signals through  
and I'm allowed to live in, my body,

a lighthouse keeper who keeps  
confusing himself with the light.

3 May 2004

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worrying about the cool air  
to make it last  
I know the worrying will  
go on and on  
yet it's the one thing I could control

3 V 04

<late>

## **INSPECTION TIME**

The bed made.

Books all over the house  
seem animate to me.

Everything does.

My problem

in a nutshell

is a nutshell, an organic  
embrace, a wall

that holds everything

in, behind it

conspiracies grow long

beards and ball games

yammer on tv eternally

almost.

Never a moment  
when the brain's not in the head.

Never a moment when the mind  
is in the brain. The nutshell.

Nothing nestled inside nothing

and it keeps talking to me.

3 May 2004

## THE GREAT RETURN

As if the ground would give way  
as if the limestone caverns under  
would open and swallow  
lawn and house and little man

down into crystal splendor there  
like Hoffmann's diamond mine  
in Sweden, or not diamond, every  
color every star inside the earth

and the earth suddenly spacious  
and we, for it would be us this  
happens to, would falter in brightness  
and be the thick doubters that we are

but still that Eden down there  
would slowly work its will in me,  
the green will of hurtles things  
and teach a door back in  
to where we have always been  
coming from, citizens of a sign

and this time we would go in again  
and in and in and tell  
anyone we chance to meet along the way

that this is our house after all,  
this time we will never leave,  
and let our sin this time be staying.

4 May 2004

<late> =====

**In the politics of heart**

the head heaves. An annoyance  
like waiting for the elevator  
before the thought begins.

Rain over Lisbon in a book.  
I come home dry, not rich,  
not poor, a man like a loaf of bread  
some woman kneaded.

Bakers work before dawn,  
the baguettes must be ready  
even before the sun  
knows how to shine.

Hear the bread thinking  
in the oven: our life  
is not like theirs, we pass  
through myriad forms,

we are wheat and water,  
carbon, hydrogen, at home  
in food and the eater of food,  
we are the measurement



inside anything that lives.

They think this way, a little  
like suicide notes left behind  
by people who thought better of it,

decided not to die, changed  
their lives, woke up and took  
a bus to Indianapolis with  
no change of clothes.

4 May 2004

## **IN THE OTHER TIME**

Who heard?

Dream did.

Who walked?

The one who couldn't.

Who died?

The one who is.

Who came back?

The one that was gone.

Who told?

The one with no mouth.

Who heard?

The sleeping one.

Who woke?

The stone beneath his head.

5 May 2004

## **PROXIMITY EFFECT**

Close to the beloved's skin  
the cautious eye detects  
pores and entrances  
like any other human flesh.

Where is love then  
when you look close?  
Is it a shimmer or a shine  
around the body

an inch or two  
outside the actual,  
a gossamer ghastly  
from so much wanting?

5 May 2004

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*remembering Leo Hamalian*

It's the way the man looked at you,  
you had no doubt, no question was happening,  
no answer was coming, but no doubt,  
no doubt at all,

he looked at you and you could see mountains,  
not the Himalayas but high, hard,  
dark against a desert sky,  
the colors we see here in autumn afternoons  
only, but some lands, some men  
see all the time.

Mountains and a man, and a woman at the well  
maybe, a woman lithe as shadow  
standing at a well beside him,  
as if they had been there from the beginning.

And then it was ordinary again, street, library, coffee shop,  
and you were just there together,  
simple as that,  
he looked at you as if you were there.

5 May 2004

<late> =====

**Less said, not less to say,**

organ grinders make traffic pause  
fair ear care bonds street to street  
with glad gridlock of  
ordinary sound.

Who hears? Peevishly exulting an  
oriole sings from tree to tree  
hides in pine and you whistle it  
along the air, its song  
means to be answered, we all do,  
fly, sing, fly, hide, sing

and the hidden word falls from the sky  
like Aurelius' nostoc  
I read about once  
in a book that hid in my mind  
like a bird in a leafy tree

leaving only its call note clear:  
here, you understand this thing.

5 May 2004

## **CERTAIN, BECAUSE DESPERATE**

Rapt in untelling  
the right one waits  
embedded in the wrong.

Rock finder, scheme  
a better finger, scratch  
chrysocolla caverns  
down the bad dream

to choose a decent color  
uncle blue or aunt vanilla  
skin on boiled milk  
a knife tip lifts  
nostalgia for vertical relation

2.

it meant a long before  
a morning taste a cliché  
a doubt house

keep waking up to  
how after so  
many years a beach

knew how to sleep

and there was walking there  
and one who, and this logic  
offended no one and yet

the wood of the jetty  
rowboat commodores  
sycophants of the sea

3.

enlaked, laic  
skin of sun sheen on  
lift out of trouble  
light enough to read by

but nobody there  
just the need  
to keep looking  
in case of in case

4.

slew of bookless wanderers  
over the sandhill  
poor Bible people have no world

it seems a feather  
from a screaming tern  
too near her nest

with all their opinions  
get away with their  
rules their words

now this cry of hers  
the first word anybody heard  
made sense

screel of Eden's closing gate  
or no or nowhere you  
at last the only garden

a self half erect in sand.

6 May 2004



## LES CHOUCAS

Half a habit of a week  
a man worsted among friends  
woven to touch but not to touch  
–the feeling is a little hour  
the advantage is year on year  
forget the feeling? –the Resistance  
is what matters, red ocher  
of Roussillon, the history of pain  
against the animals who othered

again and again the mute arithmetic  
let me just be alone with you  
sorry darling I have no alone

2.

The notary's brother lied, the judge died,  
no-see-ems ruled the morning light as if  
but nobody knows what, where do they come from,  
death, Gestapo, plague, it must be a disease  
like leprosy or perjury, sometimes you can feel  
the evil growing, cousins in the Milice,  
powwows in the Oval Office, nothing left  
to crucify, corn belt crusade, so many die,  
  
there may not be a God but God's grace

is still abounding, random breaks of beauty  
in a vengeful world, a love that listens?

3.

They're gone now, the empty friends.  
Sometimes it just doesn't work, how could it,  
the ledgers of desire are charged with  
too many different lines of credit.  
We overlap an hour maybe, and all the rest  
is fruminous, the time we spend together,  
I don't even know what the word means,  
I just write down to tell you what I heard.  
It's grainy I guess like a bushel of wheat,  
futile as an albatross in Michigan, unpassioned,  
willing to trade all that love for one good night's sleep.

7 May 2004

## ENERGY

Energy *as big as cats*  
a *network* of irrelevant  
remarks becomes connection

science explains nothing—  
it holds together as  
many things as it can count

science is a basket  
not a religion he said  
a cat as big as a cat

the moon the size of the moon  
science is the same as poetry  
only it uses all the wrong words.

7 May 2004

## ars poetica

you learn a lot when you compare  
one thing to something else

all of it wrong, all of it interesting  
all of it real. The real

is the most interesting of all,  
the real is always wrong,

it slays you. The real  
comes by night and stays.

Once I woke up without the real  
and tried to stay. But as soon

as I compared one thing to another  
the real came back, caught me,

immersed in this moment,  
a man full of prayers in a godless world.

7 May 2004

## **THE ORIGIN OF EVIL**

Most of it we do to each other.

But not all.

Some of it comes from outside.

But outside is mostly ourselves before.

7 V 04

<late> =====

## THE NATURE OF DOORS

Could the large map of the world  
–the world centered more or less on Palestine–  
be a door hidden from the wall,

something the house comes through and travels  
yearlong into ever more legendary spaces  
weird languages, pagodas, stock exchanges?

Here is the secret: a door, a door has nothing  
to do with a wall in fact, a door is pure focus,  
frame, permission, timing, formality, idea.

A door is pure idea. Going through is an accident.  
Even a bird could do that, the king observed,  
and where does anything go but the hungry sky?

7 May 2004