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THE DEMONSTRATION

Preparing for something
like a stock market
between the columns
the temple look
athletics of money
the comma of her coming
all interruptions of her thighs
arriving, would it be better?
Squeeze me. Doric columns
might have been, or tuscan,
rusticated, are you ready?
Anything, anything.
Do I have to renounce
all the words in the dictionary
before you get away
from the mirror? Just you
evidently. Apodictic.
We have blinders on our poor horse
we muffle our footsteps in anger
like the Italian traffic
deep in straw to stifle
horse hoof and iron wheel
when Verdi was dying,
as if noise had

nothing to do with music
or anger with desire,
the little snarlygram you send
proves that you still care
et cetera, are you ready?
Is the glass finally perfect
so it lets your image go?
A sailor in a bunny suit
bounding over the bourse?
Nothing proves it like money.
Call this The Demonstration,
a thousand men in a thousand
years in a dozen Sorbonnes
couldn't say it clearer,
you hate your father, you
hate everyone you love.

8 May 2004

<late> =====

Because opposite
is other, alarming
evidence of earlier
human culture
before this one

or was it human,
how many eyes
did they have,
how many fears?

Caffeine good for alertness
catnip for complex dream
chamomile for repose

for thousand of years
we go on stealing
the milk of cows

how many syllables
are there in it,
how many years to learn
a simple word like yes?

At the plume of white smoke
we know we have a pope.
When the wind blows
what is God trying to tell us?

8 May 2004

=====
But I held the spindle
in my left hand
and wound like woman
my life around the stick

and this was my torch
that led me while I slept
under waterfalls and walked
along the narrow path

between the eyelid and the eye.

9 May 2004

FOR ALL THE OTHERS

A life is to burn for another
another life and another's life
two for one and one is two

counting this way love is made
the animal lurking in the dark

*

chestnut trees, young, three or four
along the pathway from my door
to the battleground, soon it will look Swiss
with expensive peace. For the sake of this
color or fragrance I came into the night
keeping busy to forget the second-rate
inhabitants of my interrupted dream
and all I met were strangers, pale cream
of trees already flowering and before I'd done
anything at all but count them one by one

*

Because Irish, no?
And multiples of three.
Scanderbeg and his two
headed eagle, a girl

milking two goats at once,
a hill a fox and the moon,
the list wants to go one,
the women of Avignon
for this are known:
they cast longer shadows
than any others,
here is her breast
and here are her shoulders
and there in the valley see
the shadow of her open mouth.

What is she saying?
Make it up, you dream
as much as anyone,
your people lived here once,
pale, freckled, with Jewish noses
sniffing the generous lavender.
Out of nervousness and doubt
you told the truth. Rome fell.
Restless Mongols hit the road again.

Here they come
without a name
to call themselves,
without a night to hide in.
Shelter them, take them

into you and be a garden.

They are your mothers

all of them, come back

from that geography

lesson called the Dead.

You breathe among animals

and finally you remember.

9 May 2004

<late> =====

Every moment the last moment,
the painting on the wall, the last
painting of all decides to fall –
Lucretia's dagger almost
unnoticed slips in beneath the breast.

9 May 2004

THE NEW CHURCH

Teach me to understand
the summer is coming and who
am I asking, the shadows
come back, what is the difference
between a book and a bible,
between a tile on the roof and the sky?

The shadows come back,
the rock on my table
comes from the sea, a bee hive
at the edge of the woods,
a question of norms,
of motives, between ethics and law
which man can walk the road
in a lifetime
carrying a great tin votive cross
made in Mexico, no body on it,
just the inscription
above where a man would be,

there is a new church
always coming,
the clock catches fire,
who catches the train

that runs between shadows,
the man was a tiler and couldn't read,
the man was a tree and bees
came to nest in his hair,
he let them, his skin
was made of shadow, no bee could bite him,
the rock on my table says look at me now
now you have finished with him,
look at me, I am older than Calvary,
on this rock every church at all is built
and you did it, you with your wanting,
you with your house full of silent women,
your dreams unremembered at morning,
you with your skin and your shadows.

10 May 2004

<late> =====

among the losses
or the ash of a mantle
that sustains now on the
propane lantern
a very bright flame,

for the affinities of fire
question human seed
so as to release a future
constantly held in check,
trapped in the loins till
they open to your call
and then the fire speaks.

Something like that must happen,
something of the real,
it is a basic implication of the oil
the folds inside the organs
with which we also
contemplate, procreate, deceive.

10 May 2004

I warfared on the beach I swung
I inhaled salt a little tern I flew
among the ions fast
right into the bosom of the other.

11 May 2004

CANTICVM TRIVM PVERORVM

Shadrach sang in the fire

supposing it was a shower

Meshach sang in the flames

supposing the game was chess and he was good at it

Abednigo sang in the oven

supposing it was a sauna

They were Jews they died

the song is all that lives.

11 May 2004

=====

Other things waiting to be know
use the telephone
make up some new words
seeds for strange birds
you sometimes see from your window
taking some interest in your life
or else you could try to learn their Latin
those strange little people of the sky
and you don't want to learn anything new,
the old was frightening enough.

11 May 2004

=====

The heart is hunting for its animal.

“I will be you,” the heart says, “come near
into the broken pavilion over the winter sea,
bring me candy wrappers to decipher, shells
to kiss. Where are you? What language
do you think you speak?” No trash
to analyze below the benches, no bottles
to set sail with messages to Cambaluc,
all the crazy names of nowhere places.

The heart is willing to compromise: “All right,
I won’t become you, you can be your own self,
A wooden horse on the carousel, an old woman
in a Budapest café, anything you please,
just be, just be where I can take you in.”

But where is in? Where does the heart
keep its addictions safe, what closet
full of old fur coats and croquet mallets
and no door? The heart’s house has no door.
This boring old pain lasts as long as the sky.

11 May 2004

Olin

<late> =====

Scimitar not of moon of
shadow, then a politician's hand
raises, he lets fall a shadow

it carries the trivial weight
of all his word yet he believes.

Belief is the most terrible invention –
no Greek or Hindu or Buddhist
ever believed. They *knew*. Or they *did*

and let the doing be enough.
Cult and consciousness, poetry and praxis.
Nothing to believe in.

When did believing begin?
When did the individual guess at the Godness of the world
become an insistence that could be defined,
when did intuition become conviction,
and conviction turn into control?

To believe is an angry imposition
of ego's guesswork on the other's world.

The terrible sin of belief.

So much terrorism, vengeance, simple murder,
all Holocaust
grounded on a system of belief.

11 May 2004

THE RESPONSES

By the Sawkill chimney swifts
or if some hint of blue
a barn swallow over the rapids
plundering the air, no-see-ems
shanghaied in frantic piracy
in the cool of evening.

To know all the minds
that ever were. These birds
are like reading books
ten at a time, always
something I miss, always
in a shaft of sun
drown in quick water
darting through the light
a thousand answers to my single question.

12 May 2004

=====

Wake up coal
the one the angel's
tongs lifted
(from what fire?)
and brought to the prophet's
lips, partly to purify
his speech (of what
doubt or dirt?)
munda cor meum
he cried, as if the mouth
connected to the heart
and a clean word
purified the soul,
partly to punish him
for all the beauty to come.

12 May 2004