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Why were giants?
And the pears you brought
soft in the brown
paper bag soft too
from so many foldings
in the warm car waiting
for us while we walked
by the ocean then
came back and ate
are just as much part of mythology
as any ramping unicorn
I mean mythology is
everything we remember,
Mother, Rockaway the white sand the green sea.

17 June 2004

Cuttyhunk

THE ETYMOLOGY

Sometimes I wonder only a little
and then the day is closed
and the stone won't tell me a thing

but other days the *mystes* wanders
scalpel in mind to parse the light
and know everything the garbage can reveals

boasting of its ancestry
the used-up things
the archive of the world

nothing left in them but narrative
like old men in their baseball caps
how can I keep them from remembering

how can I translate this
from my Portuguese so you
of all people will know it's me

italics mean to indicate the *truth*
while all the rest of the words
retails the plausible bullshit of philosophy

crime, religion, history, desire,
Villon hanging by his honest neck,
Dutch oils of massed flowers vased

picnics under beech trees with the rain
ransacking the copper leaves
and kings mumbling their haughty genealogy

back to Adam's mistress and the blue
bolt that fell from heaven
and scared her into pregnancy

the smile of the serpent
the apple blossom before a single fruit was thought
that's how it happens

you are all my Merovingians
Miriam slept with everybody
we are all her children,

holy blood, holy hyacinth
beside the dying champion,
her heaven hair, her Paris chimney

Inuit memorizing the sea
Palestine at peace below a thunderstorm
nobody move for one whole minute

we are brothers, that's the horror,
the apostrophe that links us
abbreviates the distances between

cool morning fog and one single flower
do you understand yet
how this insinuates itself

into what it was saying and I was hearing
then I suddenly seem
to mean something too

illusion, a cramp in hearing
arthritis of the understanding.
I never meant, I only heard.

What came from me instead
were the falcons of desire
fastened from heaven down

upon its bleeding opposite,
the hurt-happy ordinary
and all the rest was bright listening.

17 June 2004

Or tell you what a code is

When a man can't count what does a woman
do she is his hard drive his imaginer

so I measured all the spaces and they were letters
I put the letters all together
they were animals
I spoke the names they formed and they all ran away

out into you where I still hear them howling

the trouble with the alphabet is there is nothing in between
the letters and nothing the letters are between

they just stand
like all the stars in the night sky jammed together
in one coruscation of the mindlight

breathless alphabet of Jews

... 17 June 2004

=====

I wear my father's expression
on my mother's face.
The practice of genetics
is half in moonlight.
Under the London plane tree
no leaves have fallen.
This is a photograph
of the author, noisy fishermen
around him hurry to the dock.
Fog. And every single
one of us is trying to tell the truth.

17 June 2004

<late> =====

casting this

as a movie the blue

sea as a stranger

the white bird

as you

walking the cliff road

where the roses rise

profuse in poison

ivy and the gulls

of course laugh at such

delight as ours

in flowers, flowers

in such bad company

especially

like a camera

trying to take

a shapshot of itself

we walk

all the way to the mind

17 June 2004

AN EPISODE OF MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY

The giant Manshope
over there on Gay Head
decided to build a causeway
so he could walk dryshod
over to Cuttyhunk
across the Sound,
to match the one he built
to link Ireland with Scotland
a while before --

both bridges failed, left rocks & reefs
because this time great
Cthulhu came up and bit his toe
No, says he,
nobody goes from island to island
without risking the sea,

a bridge is an insult to Risk---
and risk is the only hope you've got
and faith and charity,
your only tool.
Because you're in danger,
you own the earth.

So Manshope, Maushop, all different ways
his name is spoken,
stepped back to the Vineyard
nursing his sore history
and blaming all his pretty wives,
the way we still do.

18 June 2004

DIAGNOSIS

The sea is loud this morning
understanding

*

Poise the hand before striking
the word waits

*

What seems lacking this morning is
that metabolic rush
the passion to speak out and capture
devious states of consciousness
in a mesh of facts,

facts that are things, things that are words.

Gull laughter woke me
to rain and fog, the loud sea.

18 June 2004

=====

I think we sleep so well here
because the beds run due north
and the dogs drag the sleds easy
to the Middle Point
where all the *dark light* rises
that illuminates human sleep

so dream, sister, dream.

The blue light shows all your anxieties
clear as airports or hotels
clear as red brick and dog bark
the sled is coming back,
the Northern Lights are all around your bed
you wake gasping in the ordinary

you'll never get to the plane on time.
And this omission will spare your life.
All hotels burn down every night.

18 June 2004

Four thirty a.m. slowly the light gains

thunder not far, and rain here
the birds sound just like the valley
robins blackbirds sparrows
no gulls yet -- I could just see it
if one flew by. I. What am I
doing in this sea picture, a cold
woke me, a tickle in the throat

it must have been a word I breathed
in or out, how will I ever know

woke me and I went to gargle
sit by the window and look out.
Lightning in the north. No colors yet,
a soft grey world.

2.

Then the differences begin to seem.
Road glistens. A there appears
beyond the here. A little wind
that no one sees.

All this while
the sea is loud and quick
but everything I see is motionless and slow.
There is no sky yet.

3.

Little world,
I see by inches
and write down
words I barely see.
But this description
we do so busily
is a ribbon
in an angel's hair
she readily plucks out
lets fall, we're left
with feeling,
the indescribable
suchness of time
going by us,
rafters of everything we think,

the gloom on which we predicate
or loom to weave on what we wear
when we go out walking,
the cloth that's all you know of me
is fixed on that frame.

4.

I see so much now
and nothing has changed
but seeing.

The birds

do not annotate the process,
not like Jannequin or Messiaen,
or maybe now they do
by going silent. Down
along the beach the generator hums,
electricity begins, lights
come on in a few houses
something must be going on.

Not here. A small bird resumes
his incantations.

Now the air is full of what will be light
and two fishermen go down the hill.
I'm not alone in Galilee.

5.

As I write it down I realize
I never was alone down there
all my childhood I heard gospels
and I was Jesus when I heard

and when I read them later
I was him again, those stories
were always about me.

All Christians must be like that,

it must be the nature
of narrative itself,
Story with a Single Subject,
must be the nature of grace.

How can you stand
so close to that charged mirror
and not see yourself
in every tremor of the glass?

A Christian must be one
who thinks he's Christ
because the only story he knows
must be the story of himself.

6.

The pink hydrangea shows up now
not pink yet
some empty color that might as well be white
or whatever isn't dark anymore

and now its clearly day.

Anybody at all
can see all the houses.

19 June 2004

THE SACRIFICE

but it is now
and the sailor sails
in heavy rain
though the fog has lifted
just enough to show the beach

and what has the dog done?
Mithras has killed the dog
and let the bull go free,
the world must end today
or any day that he does that

and a face looks out of the ground.
Be simple. Blasphemy
is the easiest sin,
to *blame* another or oneself
is how that game begins.

Mothers stand in the middle of the air not underground,
everything is upside down,
the sailor is lying on the beach
drenched with something he doesn't know
is it sea or sky that drenches him?
Heaven has salt of its own
that falls along the rain.

The bull is supposed to go
spouting its heartblood to refresh
the galaxy, blood is the other side of milk,
the bull is supposed to go and be god
in heaven, to disseminate his meat and juices
over the whole world, a nutrient idea

released by the small god's knife.

The smaller the god the closer the blade.

But this one morning, in rain,

Mithras let the bull go

unharmd, wandering into the sea, scuffed and shuffled
it did through the surf,

and Mithras threw the dog high in the air,

god knows what it became,

there's a dog in everything,

so killless would the world go on?

Mithras his risk. The wager

that a world can exist out there

without shedding blood.

Who now will judge

whether we are alive or not?

An hour ago the sun comes out

and what does it mean?

No history. No beast
slain or unslain.
Nothing walks in the sea.

I have come back again
from the dream,
my hands are cold,
on the deck rail a small
spider web shivers in the sun.

19 June 2004

Cuttyhunk