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CANDLEMOTH WOMANMAN

The breeze is up today
and seethes the maple –

use words wrong
like churning butter
until they come

then something you never touched
touches you back

Or touches your back
firm as a shadow
quick as a candle
maybeing all over the room

and oh then outside
what happened to the night?
I fell asleep and it was gone
around me when I woke

So many lost children
their pictures in the paper
I think I hear them in the woods
but people will think anything

the sheer loneliness of light.

11 July 2004

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Who takes them away,
the ones who fail to understand?
You touch them as they pass
with your delicate instrument
half wand half stethoscope
no firmer than a seagull feather and
you know them deep
and they know you as they know the weather
as deep as you may or may not be
and then they're gone,
the wand quivers in your hand.

11 July 2004

HAVE TO BE SO MANY SEEDS ENTERING THE WORLD

Sunlight on a stainless diner
stark in its parking lot like a steel lotus
in a salt lagoon, yes, and the cars
are canoes the cars are tortoises
the cars are gods
who come to carry local girls away
for sacrifice in strange stone cities
abandoned by all but the living,
sacrifice that takes so many years,
the girls are old women before they pass,
64 or 80, any multiple of sixteen
the holy age of chosen virgin sacrifice,
over and over again all through their lives
and then they're done, they rest
in other parking lots with polished stones
and angels in cement weep rain on them
and each has a label like *mother, sister, wife*
and so they snooze and sunlight floods the diner
where girls on swivel stools eat sticky buns
drink herbal tea and wait their turn.

11 July 2004

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Look up
from what I'm not doing
and an unfamiliar flag
is flying from my roof
and the heart begins
to explain it to me:
the stripes mean punishment
of course the white
forgiveness and the blue
flower *is the rose*
of complete forgetting
but the little golden hand
means you.
The one reaching for you now.
Your only hope
is the next person you meet.

11 July 2004

<late:> =====

<in the gazebo>

Staring into the dark
wondering when the fox
will begin to bark the way
he did last night,
I'm sitting so close
to his den, I wonder
if there are cubs in there
that make her anxious,
if it's a she I heard,
pacing around me
barking last night,
we have to share this earth,
he or she or they or I.
Being is a group endeavor.
To be is to be with
someone, somewhere.
Midnight fox, fox, fox
where are you now.
Cars on the highway go fast,
share their excitement
with me by the sound of speed.
We are all drunk on the same
excess of entity.

11 July 2004

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as if the main rule
was never tell anybody
just keep talking

in the early days of MTV
seek / check the tapes
everything was predicted

that we have become
all the wars the glittering
humiliations foretold

Vanity's dress stretched
taut on Monica
the overdetermined

music of what happens.

12 July 2004

O'ERTHROWN BY LOOKING

the picture falls
into its component colors,
rub your eyes, ask
“what was I seeing?”
and then see nothing
vague memory of a blue
bowl filled with pears
a train on a trestle
a sentry asleep under a tree.
Snow is falling on all the world
and we think this white opacity
is light. There is nothing here.
Perhaps you have already
eaten the pears, *cool*
and soft the morning.
You spoke it aloud,
and heard yourself saying it
syllable by syllable
carefully, as if it
were the password of the day.
How did you know it?
Is a morning itself
built of sheer listening?
Everybody has a head,
eyes always to the front,

you never need directions.

What were you looking at
before the picture stopped?

12 June 2004

INTIMATE EXPERIMENTS

towards a general theory of energy
action at a distance
between two sentient beings.
Persons. *De amicitia*, treatise
on friendship Folderol
with umbrellas and zippers,
doors, fussing with your feathers,
unknotting the silk tie, the strap
depended, a flotilla of hats
on their way to church
god knows what they do in there
thinking by means of hymns
I am such a shabby protestant
bent over the sacred text
in mortal isolation and screw you,
I want the congregation of the alphabet
to sing to me, the dark oratory
of the spaces in between the words
which I have to solve before breakfast
every mortal day. Dear master,
you must be underwrought
to talk so common. Can't help it,
dream is an incurable disease,
the yeomen dream amidst their corn
and martyrs in Jerusalem dream loud—

where can I be safe from noticing?
I see everything the same
and all of it is good, does that make me
an early phase of God, in Eden,
looking to the right and left?
I made none of what I see.
I put the colors for you back in the tubes –
that much is my symphony, withdraw,
breathe in, close eyes, think out,
let sleep be civic and particular,
breathe out some more till only light
is left in the store, then sell that
to ignorant immigrants who think
the streets are made of travel and the wall
will not grow old, take away their bread,
sausages, lavender, prayerbooks,
Black Forest crucifixes and give them
the universal undemanding light:
“Everything you see is yours!” That’s
what light tells me, that Satan on the cliff,
we all have been tempted in the desert,
we all fell. No wonder they call him Lucifer.

12 July 2004

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Zip-loc bags. Anesthesia.

Cell phones that take pictures.

All the rest was Babylon.

12 VII 04

<late:> =====

Cauteries of innocence
because to be so tender
is a wound. Summer afternoons
the Bronx. A view west up the street
to the high right field seats in the Stadium –
beautiful angle, ballistics of memory,
Justine on my knee.
She healed me, send me
out for chopped beef she cooked
for dinner, later, when Manny came home.
Me and Manny and Justine
and the avenues were so long
they frightened me with their endless going.
the buildings reach the sky
and I had no place yet,
no place on earth, my lap
I could sometimes offer,
and my fear, It is terrible
to remember a time when I had
nothing to remember. An innocent,
traumatized by the evening light.

12 July 2004

End of NB 265

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With the rememberers busy at the slaughterhouse
the forests have the day off, only the trucks make noise
torturing the fourth and fifth stories of the human ear
the ones that look out over the Methodist chapel and view
the distant quivering gleam-line that means the sea.
So while the back-up beepers shrill, the sky closes
and the human subject is stuck inside his skull
as if he has hands (she has hands) that don't work
because the hour is too cold. Silence warms us,
is often blue, and then she can see the beach again,
the subject, and find his way through the maze
of her intentions right out the actual door.

You have to fall in love within a dozen hours of
arriving in any new town – it might be the librarian
where you go to establish postal identity, or the man
at the Chevy service counter you meet because Martha
(your '89 Cavalier) is exhausted after the trip
hauling the trailer with your books and aquariums.
Or maybe the girl actually reading a book in the park
under the Spanish-American War memorial,
it hardly matters what the book is, homework even,
or how to learn Welsh. So few languages anyhow
have one-syllable names, you think, maybe it's Dutch.
Maybe she's waiting for her lover who will
oh what will he do, lovers are so unreliable,

kill or skedaddle, an old word you remember from
cowboy movies, it ought to be spelled with a Q.
Anyhow, love, fall in, do it. Fall and be counted. Fall
and emit vaporous professions. Join that religion,
go to the temple every day but don't give him all your money.
Her. Who can tell who you will find to love?
Or who you will turn out to be while you're doing it?
Massive resistance to commitment. Read interesting ads
in health food stores, you only go to get salt cashews,
learn why butcher's broom extract is good for the ears.
Somewhere in all this, your new life is waiting.
You wanted to come here with nothing but the fish.
The personalities inside you have all been dismantled.
No more remembering! Wonderful as a pigeon
taking incontinently off from the roof,
keep looking up, how that one stone-colored bird
does something to the whole sky. From the little hill
you study the skyline below, your new house
is hidden from you by unknown buildings, puzzlement,
you're caught in your raincoat under a cranberry cloud

13 July 2004

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quietfall the delivery

of rain

can I call you now

before the dream

is even dry

get you out of bed

make you use

language to me

answering me in woods

rocks ripples of

the earth I think

must mean something

each one must tell

who you are

and who I am to you

so difficult to do

anything the day begins

every impulse is a violation,

a spatter of rain

is enough of an idea

13 July 2004

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It's probably where I grew up
but I think morning is like a ferry
and you free and quiet on board
just observing everything
till the boat gets there and sidles
into the yielding notch of dock
and then the other thing happens
the other people day
begins, it's not yours any more
only the observation lasts
the sunlint on the narrow bay.

13 July 2004

<late:> =====

Everything is busy but the night.

I tried to call you
but the ocean intervened,
bought a telephone for a penny
and tossed another penny in the lake
so the two kinds of copper, kin,
begin to gossip.
All I ever had to do is listen.

2.

But what if it didn't speak?
What if I forgot how to read
or my hands forgot to hold?

3.

Reading is just another kind of holding
and the night still didn't do anything,
the way they don't do. Who?
In the Jardin des Plantes we felt a general air
that all the animals were leaving or had gone.
It is said when cities say goodbye to elephants
and cathedrals say goodbye to whatever fantasy
got ordinary people to carve them out of the sky.
What a strange slow dance we are.

13 July 2004

∴ μγον—πο—λ ∴

Out of the south east
under and over the cloud

over the hardwood trees
and the noisy foxes that bray under the bush

over the windowsill and over the sky
come into the place where I can hear you

come into the place where we discuss
with rosary beads and skull bones and drums and horns

discuss the weather of eternity
the bank accounts of all the cities of hell

the meaning of music and the tall shadow
the tiniest man casts just before sundown

as if his soul finally came out
and started making dark prostrations to the east

and nothing was inside him anymore
except the smile of empty air.

13 July 2004