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## THE POPE VISITS LOURDES

Every time you twist it Jesus dies again  
that's what religion means the repetition  
of a gesture until it's figured out at last  
by those who make it saint and fox and fool

Lourdes this week is full of Africans  
they show on television the holy ghost  
clear in the color of their clothes  
they trust the place to which they've come

a woman stood up in those rocks and spoke  
strange words in dialect to a little girl  
it is not expected to be understood  
just drink this water it will do you good

the wind blows open the door and light comes in  
remarkable opera of the ordinary  
morning at his fingerprints he pauses  
anxious for the least trace of significance

the book he's been trying to banish for 2000 years  
not meaning but experience, not obedience  
but setting sail, not fasting but enduring  
the onslaught of mercy in a boundless world

she must have said  
this candy bar cures hunger  
this lake heals distance  
but this water staves off death

not because of what you think but who I am, she said.

13 August 2004

La Borne

=====

citizen machine built of illfare  
what the govt does the govt is the mouth  
of money the man of ufacturers  
makes malfare to make the many  
into money the eat the citizen machine

13 VIII 04, La Borne

## MODULATION

Amplitude arrest (the hill) stony  
person person talking person  
listening in this language  
hear me means understand  
the mind of it so simple is

a raft is foundering a jar  
is full of beans a woman  
puts on in each hole she  
jabs with her grandfather's cane

the dead make the best farmers  
aloha we're back from the reef  
the fish are safe from the sea  
where a different air controls

and music spills and nothing bells  
and nobody knows, old plastic  
radio grungy on the shelf  
screams a dumb old song she loves.

13 August 2004, La Borne

=====

*(Pope in Lourdes today)*

What would he be coming  
why would a mountain be so far away from the sky  
why would a whistle carved out of wood  
why would a bell

among so many bells  
be ashamed of its word  
a bell has a word  
a wood has a bell  
why would he be coming when everyone is going  
why would a sick old man  
came to where the young girl cures disease

will he be cured  
will he cure others  
will he cure the bell of its voice  
will he cure the town of its bells  
will he cure the valley of its mountain?

14 August 2004

## I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

she said in the patois of the place  
meaning *You are that too* –  
you little girl kneeling, old man scoffing,  
you lovers trembling in the shadows of the rock,  
you fox running away under the bush,  
you all are, all of you conceived and born without sin.

She came to change our sense of our  
own nature. We built a shrine  
to the messenger and forgot what she said.  
She is the messenger, mother of god,  
our sister. She is the message.  
If we are immaculate we are healed.

You are immaculate, she said,  
in your beginning, no sin  
but what you do.  
You were conceived in joy and born in pain  
now everything is up to you.

14 August 2004  
La Borne

=====  
What analyst waits for the soap  
to leap from the fountain  
like the moon rising?  
*Experiences cleanses itself,*  
water runs, running water  
purifies itself in 100 feet  
his father said.

Rest  
in confusion a few  
days more he says,  
the Kleenex of light  
will dry your tears.

Nothing to understand  
nothing to change  
just leave me out of your dreams.

But he knows he's forgotten something  
something they both need to know  
what was it?

The Tagus  
flows into the sea.  
Ash from Hecla  
is used as medicine.  
Something like that.  
Something about weather.

14 August 2004



# 1

It's only a number.  
Lammed, central resonance  
of a name, all our names,  
lammed, L, goad, instruction,  
melamed the teacher  
prodding you from behind,

pushing you forward  
to your own nature.  
The good teacher is  
always behind you  
pushing, poking,  
doesn't stand in front  
blocking the view,  
always behind,  
only behind you,  
lammed, thirty, only a number  
but everything is.

Everything is behind you  
prodding you on.  
Just a number, *lammed*, 'a goad  
for animals,' just  
a number but everything is.

All numbers come from one,  
everything except you.

Only you are different,  
you with your name across the sky.

14 August 2004, La Borne

=====  
If the tree weren't there we'd see the meadow  
stretching up the hill we'd see a tree  
far up and very small. Taninges,  
Samoëns. La Chartreuse de Mélan  
full of silent art, some of it  
geared for sound. Wind. Weary.  
The botanic hillside of La Jaÿsia  
up through the Carpathians  
past the chapel of the Holy Magdalene,  
Mary the Magnificent. Who makes us great.  
Her door was locked  
but there was a little hole  
in her window, big enough  
to put my hand through,  
you aimed the camera in,  
latch of her gate this Song  
of Songs. I'm thinking  
of Magdalene and looking at a tree,  
a willow it may be, but what do I know  
about the endless love affairs of trees?

14 August 2004, La Borne

=====

cloud over mountain  
read the instruction  
manual then you can cry

14 August 2004, La Borne

=====

Dark in two hours. Light in nine more.

Summer winding down.

Snow in the far south massif.

Que sais-je? the book asks  
and answers in a thousand volumes.

Say something, mountain.

Just because you're stone  
you don't know how to be silent.

Only people can do that.

14 August 2004, La Borne

=====  
Life is just numbers  
but what a number?  
the miracle pills  
the birds the stars  
all the namables  
that keep us going  
on the botanic garden  
path uphill ever  
higher to the ruins  
on the top, shrine,  
stone we pray to,  
the breeze up there  
that reads us like a book.

14 August 2004, La Borne

=====

Cow with no horns.

Castigate. Cow with one  
foot on a rock

Columbus coming.

Early morning Pleiades

even cold mountain

summer who.

Cow with a cliff

near a song.

Coming. Still coming.

Like a camera who.

Tell by signs

some seen some held.

Cow too far

away to tell.

Away to hold.

15 August 2004, La Borne

=====

said kind things  
for a change  
about the light

mash the sun  
over said field

the duke  
made it different

gave it colors  
a cross  
    every  
town spells  
its own way  
mountain.

15 August 2004



## **TUBE**

of a tyro  
rafting from La Baume  
down the Dranse clear  
to Thonon-les-aBains  
in all the flat  
lake glare  
astir with mountain  
air, smuggler  
of the most precious  
one we can't live  
five minutes without  
sustains him.

We go to the source  
and ride it wrong  
back to where we  
thought we began  
but thought folds  
in upon itself,  
it takes forever  
not to go home.

15 August 2004, La Borne

## **BLUISH CEREMONIES AVAIL**

Then the promoter comes  
a godless man whose father  
invented or imported  
god in the first place  
I forget which, I hardly matter.  
The garnet twins,  
what do they mean  
by riding their horses  
so deep into the woods  
that they forget me?  
What color am I then?  
Leave most of the words out  
and find out what's being said.  
Analyze silence. Dip  
the tip of your tongue in it  
and you'll know what lies  
between and what  
it lies between. What tells  
truth. The silence knows.

15 August 2004, La Borne

## VOUGHASHI NO

Wish something to tell  
ironworks the Fair  
shoot carbine break  
bottles I hear them  
from up here  
above the brass band  
the pitch carries ski club cake sale  
the little bar prepacked  
crepes and cidre  
fish for trout  
woodcarved monks  
and marmots the lottery  
booth. Booth  
is an old word  
like bench. Like what we do  
to each other.  
*Voguez chez nous*, have fun  
with us. Trust nobody  
who looks at you,  
a true friend stands  
beside you behind you  
the rock goes up the  
water comes down.  
The arguments all  
are silent here. Pythagoras  
must have been a god.  
He found it in the street  
in him. Where everything is.  
The highway up your body

to and fro the head.  
Via sacra. I am the white  
line down your middle  
wet in any weather  
quiet arrow, painless pain  
finding you  
where least you think you are.  
So many rivers  
are between us.  
Genders, gardens,  
languages. We were just  
as the beginning  
when you died, you had  
almost conquered me  
kissed me on the mouth  
so many times  
I'm sleeping now  
the long sideways  
sleep of numbers.  
We were supposed  
to do it, we were  
supposed to be the one,  
our mouths to say  
the word. And now.  
Loss of a lover  
loss of a part of speech  
loss of a color  
from the spectrum  
we once could see.  
They didn't know you  
at all, thought

you were someone  
but no, you were everything.  
The world has never  
gotten over the loss.  
Numbers don't work anymore.

15 August 2004, La Borne