

9-2004

**sepA2004**

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**as an introduction to *Opening the Seals***

Understanding where the light comes from

Aquitaine the old  
beforeness, how they said,  
the basqueness, how,

into the Lascaux of language I have gone  
to meet you there

furor for furor matched—  
it breaks the brain to be there  
where the words are still half rock  
half god

matter and there is no god,  
not yet.

To get over and over up there  
down in the deepest streets  
the contradictions  
of blue light in red meat

until I am parsed  
by you and by you  
made to speak.

1 September 2004

=====

Not to know so much  
is a nice religion

go out to the barn  
and see what the neighbor's up to

that's enough. That's Goethe  
in Weimar, Faust on the North Sea.

Reclaim the mind  
from those who mean to use it—

base alchemy  
to use the holy light just to see.

1 September 2004

=====

The tree has fallen  
in the forest  
and can you hear me?

I am alone  
with all the answers  
ready to tell,

a strip of sunlight through the underbrush.

1 September 2004

## WORD IN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE

Does the word mean *voice*  
or does it mean *morning*?

Or could it be both? Both wake us,  
want to, from the dark of silence

sever us from dream.

Our Lady of Language pray for us.

Now is the hour

of our talk.

Just talk to me.

\*

The man couldn't move  
we needed an ambulance  
an ambulance is a think that walks for you  
carries you with it

we had with us people who had spoken  
Magyar from childhood  
but somehow that didn't help  
wasn't clear

I had to do the communicating myself  
gestures and English, the Hungarian official  
tried to understand,  
warned us do not bring

the break-leg man to local hospital  
hospitals are terrible  
but what could we do?  
Or was it Maltese?

It was Hungary, the cars were old,  
one American from the '50s, red,  
with fins, so strange,  
our car but couldn't speak our language,

it's not fair, or Basque,  
that's what I tried,  
counted to ten in ancient Aquitaine  
the primal language of all Europe

and that changed the situation.  
The helpful policeman could speak English now,  
fueled by the mother tongue  
and helped us.

Language helps us.  
Language is us. Our Lady  
of Language pray in us,  
pray as us, teach us to count

to ten and back again,  
heal the man's leg so he can walk  
heal the tongue so we can speak  
to people in the street. Heal the street.

2 September 2004

=====  
I heard a new bird this morning  
*hubble bubble* it said sweetly  
many times over, a liquid sound  
such as Persian poets  
put in the mouths of nightingales,  
their bulbul could aim at this  
the sound I heard this morning  
in autumn cool and the leaves  
dancing sunlight. It said  
what it said, it didn't whistle,  
it was a comment, not a noise,  
not a signal. It called,  
the first word rising,  
the second fell. They were words  
I almost understood but the bird  
I had never heard before,  
a bird who made the morning  
speak in syllables. I walked  
into the trees to put out seed,  
I said his words back to him  
as well as I could  
so he would know whatever he could  
know of my intentions.  
As much as you do, yourself,  
I think the bird said.

2 September 2004

=====

Quick leaves through window screen  
onto the checkered paper fall.  
Shadows. Moire of screen  
and wind, comings and goings  
of the leaf shapes, which are dancer  
shapes now, advancing, retreating,  
always tending towards,  
not side to side. They find me.  
Outside, the carpenters are hammering.  
Percussion. Everything fits. That sort  
of morning where I wake into your voice  
needing you more than before.

2 September 2004



=====  
Only so many waitings  
then the hour  
camels pausing at the door  
everyone alive  
knows the smell of their breath  
smells like time  
and the orchids wither on the roof  
and the garage calls with bad news  
and far away the glaciers you see  
grow smaller and smaller

You know all this of course  
the carpenters  
are hammering out code  
and you're afraid to think who  
is busy deciphering all these signs,  
maybe the ones who supervise  
the huge whitish pinkish mottled anaconda  
that lives a mile away where the road bends  
they showed you last night  
when you were sleeping and could not look away.

3 September 2004

=====  
Come not to the bespoken  
but the random *found*  
a ship amidst archipelagoes  
stuffed with strange meat  
that talks in its sleep

there is no language yet,  
the Plain of Shinar's still to come  
all our Basques are trying  
stones and consonants along the way,

*experiences* on the road to say.

This is ship. We meat.  
In sleep mutter. Some hear.

All we can do to get there is to listen.

3 September 2004

## **DRACONIC MEASURES**

Love the world  
anyhow.  
Lick my fingers  
lick your lips.

\*

The enemy is obvious,  
it's the friend that's subtle,  
find one if you can,  
good morning, lagun,  
maite zaitut.

\*

But where the rock has ears  
the birds have pens to write stuff down.  
Attend to random gists of information.  
All the rest is lies.

3 September 2004

=====

I have to switch to modes of weather

I was a fireman  
in that life  
a goldfish admiring ivy  
I still kiss brick  
you are my arch  
made mesh  
of my loose ends  
moiré the autumn after

I will not give you up  
you're poetry  
the green cars block off mythic streets  
what we dream about  
doesn't have to come true  
it came already  
it all depends on where you  
stop for breath

ballrooms full of you.

4 September 2004

## PICTISH MIRROR

antique tongue depressor  
hairbrush of a dead woman

will you dare to look close  
the sweet mamaloshn of the dream  
tells you enough

there is no language  
where you come from

no favorite food, no olive oil,  
just something at your side  
or sometimes behind you

pale, like the other side of a shadow,  
the shadow's shadow  
that stands up in the middle air and marches  
and shows you where to go

yes, that you, the one  
the new found language talks to  
when I can make from  
time to time my own shadow listen.

4 September 2004

=====  
The early part of the day  
means something I hold.  
A long thick fabric  
like a runner down the hall  
flushed with twilight  
crimson and dark sand.

But it is morning down here,  
the light looks like someone.

someone I never knew  
years ago, sitting on the steps  
down Sutton Terrace  
dark sand the color of her hair

and she was weeping.  
Morning is so cowardly and wise.  
You have not yet consented to time.  
Nothing moves unless you let it.

5 September 2004

=====  
In those days there was nothing but the street.  
Point Lookout once a summer  
maybe where we could see four states  
at once or was it six  
and the escarpment ends

though I knew no such word then  
for what lifted us in never-ending sunlight  
over the Hudson plain.  
In those days there was no rain.  
No rain, no words, no understanding.

Only books I read, to try to find  
how people meant inside, because  
in books they talked but all around me  
no one spoke of anything but weather.  
I thought that books were a street  
I lived on, and people walked  
and went somewhere and came back  
sooner or later with a lot to say.  
A view of six states or was it five.  
Which way was I looking. My father smiled.  
All he ever loved was ambiguity.

5 September 2004

## THE SECRET BODIES

of so many sacred  
bodies bidden  
and biding in my street.

They hide in me:  
the words give shelter,  
portico for Leiris was Y  
and my street was S,  
I lived among the letters  
that were colors,  
Brown at the corner of S.  
R was north, my name  
and my direction. Rrrrrr.  
But my hair was brown  
sort of, with some wine  
in it and fire, the time  
was wrong for being blue,  
the time was Wartime they said,  
time is a kind of camouflage:  
color of a camel walking  
through a date palm grove  
remembering the names of God.

What can anybody know?  
The bitter silences  
inside the alphabet  
when no fluid comes  
emming down to c me  
before Avenue U.  
I lived in the alphabet  
and loved the rain,  
that's all you need of me.



The rain kept people home  
and let me read, rain  
was the mother of ink,  
rain was darkness and reading  
and when the sun came out  
the story stopped.  
Tell no story when the sun is shining.

I wanted to find a room  
white as a blank page,  
wanted to line it with books  
whose outstretched spines  
would speak innumerable  
sentences I must interpret,

the order of books on a shelf!  
The orders they give!

For I was bidden as much as forbidden,  
the words waiting and my family negating,  
in my innocence I thought the words were free.  
I thought they named all the things that could be me.

And I became every word I saw,  
conquered every city that they named,  
had every disease and every wife,  
every word was the story of me.

5 September 2004

=====

how many stories  
are in one letter?

finally  
there is only hlbq.

5 IX 04

=====  
Have I missed the hour?  
I'd know by color.  
What color is your name today,  
your power?

I put on a stone green shirt  
I am lichen, and black pants,  
I am a swamp a marsh  
full of bitterns and rats,  
they will build an airport on my knees

you will land there  
wearing your ski-shop knitted top,

the sea will try to befriend the mountain  
the sea knows too much about the sky

the sea is the sky's long-suffering wife  
a mountain is just one of those other women.

2.  
But that doesn't put shoes  
on your infant's feet –  
I have no children  
and they're too young to walk

instead I spread some leather  
soft and thick and true  
over the whole surface of the earth  
so she or he can walk barefoot everywhere

I call it dream and let you walk there too.

3.

So it really is about labor,  
unions, organizing, meat packers,  
laundry workers, railroad men.  
It really is about conditions of production  
sale and resale, theft on a grand scale  
and punishment reserved for petty thieves.

Destroy a country? Go to the White House.  
Sell a joint and go to jail.  
At *some* point [the] people have to figure it out.  
They never did. They never do.  
They can't think well, their wits  
are dulled by aspiration and  
the materials for thought they're given  
is just the glue that holds them to the trap.

We need new materials for thought  
and high motivation, humility, austerity and fun.  
Dada poets died in the trenches  
giggling as they saw the last light.  
There never was a revolution.

All things so called were only political,  
some cabal killing to replace another.  
We need an economic revolution,

and economy is a household, economy is everyone.

6 September 2004

=====  
I feel the unseen world  
press so hard on me  
the lords of Karma  
who I am

I did it

having done this  
endure the seeds of this  
as they grow  
to these  
and these until  
no part of the world  
is free from that simplest doing.

Having not done that  
I wait half-breathless  
for the silences  
to answer me  
and tell what it wants,  
the outside-me world.

But there is no such place.  
I am left alone with God and you.

6 September 2004