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PARMENIDES: *ON BUDDING BEING*

Overtaken from the Greekish
though he was not Greek

not that at all, all
words are in a different language
from what the man speaks

the woman speaks,

there is no native language,
Parmenides says his language was horses
a white horse and a black
horse on the ecliptic,
subject and verb his horses were

you need them
stallion and mare
to make a proposition

dyadic not dualist
he says they carried me
as far as my heart had it
in me to desire

because the heart needs
what is not here
to turn it into
what is here and goes and returns

for my heart was
not a palace but a path
for what does any heart desire
but to be gone?

What can a heart know of standing still?
It is the one that never stops,
one of the horses,

and *placeless* the desire – ου τοπος –
already we are
are on the way
(To be is to be gone)

Now let us suppose the teacher said
that every word means only *now* –
like a telephoto lens compressing depth
language squeezes time

language itself
know nothing of the intervening years –
image the son of Parmenos be speaking now
innocent of history

because two horses cannot carry one man
there must have been a vehicle
contrivance in which on which, as if a maiden
arrayed for the wedding or a warrior
carried dying home, they carried him
to the appointment,

enthymeme in the argument,
for all our SUVs we do not know
the car in which he rode,
although we're always seeing Krishna the charioteer
or Athena the charioteer
riding before us saying *What you see as me*
is what you are
we forget the chariot in which we ride,

o woe is me if I forget the Chariot
(for the name of the chariot is my name)

left out, it rusts in the rain,
we call that time, or villainy.
The history.

I have heard men talk about this text of his
so I am ignorant of most of what it means

because what it means
is mostly what it meant
to those who came on it
before me

(but he said the horses were both mares,
he said that equal love would carry us,
Lilith and Eve brought Adam to the castle
where the silence around them they named God
and when it did not answer supposed it wrath)

for the text cannot read its readers
cannot self-inscribe their reading
resorbing the gestures of their understanding

and so it comes, virgin at last, to my hands.

Blameless I read, but not much boon
since I know only what it says
on this day in September
when the secret spring begins

the secret hands that milk the winter.

15 September 2004

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Happy birthday to the waking mind
gasping loose from the spirit wood.
Doctor, can you turn my mind into my soul?

15 September 2004

=====

Simple bias:

redskins in the hills

resisting clichés.

No wars with arrows

horses, stone or metal

projectiles, slogans,

whale hunts, water.

Only the eternal

war against the white.

15 September 2004

=====

The alchemical operation

went wrong. Starkey
fled backwards (island),
Uri Lloyd underground,
Tesla dried out and blew
himself away into a conscious
dimension at right
angles to Manhattan.
Raffinesque made what he could,
stayed of what was left.
Some flowering plants
we had to begin with.
A mushroom that he understood.
A scroll purporting history
we swallowed and slept.
And all the rest was suffering & war.

15 September 2004

=====

allude
elude
illude

these three
I give thee
from this one

never say it
never admit

sing it
sing something
that will make them
hearing

say it to themselves.

THE WAKING

But this is what I thought:
this pen
writing this word
woke me

I came downstairs to find it

But another pen another color almost another
language took me
from my own
into my own

*

Language writing
is that place where one can
fail to make sense
but one can't get lost

because one is always language's own

except in dream.

Decide: who woke me?

You woke me.

Why did you wake me?
To write you down
in this moment and all time to come

this simple fluid
the water that burns into the page

(ink is time's blood)

No. Who woke you?
You woke me.

Why did I wake you?
To be me.

Which of us will do the deed?
The one who's left
when the word is gone.

Will there be anyone
and where did it go?
Two questions confuse the answer.
The subject sleeps.

But I don't want the middle of the night hour
to belong to anybody else

the roots of words
are in me

an *hour* is any limit, time's *horizon*,

rise
to see beyond the rim

the word gives a glimpse over the wall of the thing

rim

the sweet fruit
puckers the mouth

rimmon,
 what is one
 falls into myriad

ruby seeds.

seeds. same. sow.

I want the lost hour to be me,

found, telling where I have been
and pretending with its last breath
it is where I am.

the brother I never had
dies every night
when I wake
without him

a day is pretending I remember who he is and what he did.

15 September 2004

THE NIGHT SKY IS INSIDE

After a whole day
coming back to
thinking about you,

paper and ink,
delta of the Nile
the only river in the sky

that flows me here
I somehow answer.

exiled princes reading
atlases, half-dreaming
half-remembering,
dollar bills floating in a bowl of milk,
I love you, Donald Duck,

you more than cock crow can
wake the sleeping nations,

expostulations of winged desire,

arise,
twill-sleek the cuisse-cladding
nonpareil,

images
haunt us, all of us, not one of us
free from these complex shadows,
counsel of strange advocates
sorting beans in the dark by feel,

o look up and try to read
the complex intersecting beams of light
from several stars,

making by their union where they cross
this dimensional space and all objects in it,

a wolf howling for your lap.

15 September 2004

=====

What spills
from bars is dawn, love happens
when the drinking is done,
the sun. It's that way every planet,

can't be different, it's the one
or the other, anything else
has to be a museum
filled
with the faces of everyone
you have ever been
one by one all the way back.
Can't see with the sun in my eyes.

16 September 2004

WHERE ANGELS FEAR

And where they fled
each determined to be first
you could have heard an organ
being Kiel or Lübeck churches in the sky,
those horses reading Kant down there
across the heath, snickering, whinnying,
the blue arena roars with feedback
—blue systems self-spawn applause—
flat countries make round music—
who is a decent stylist even so
when not too Scotch — the only nation
where prose-poems are not found—
but right now the hurricane bites Biloxi
because all the books —read and unread—
molder in the cellar and

The Great Pause Comes

notate your silence
or they'll steal it,
dear friend, put your initials
on every pause

let love come back
and change your name
—everybody's girl—
copyright every grain of sand

o I know you want to be
ordinary like a clock
a calendar girl
from the body shop

walking down the cloud,
it is a matter
of standing still
of posing for the eye

quarry outlines
against horizon,
her!

 The boy lifts
his eyes from her

at last to the mirror and
fifty years have passed,
he's old and looks it
but what are looks

what kind of guarantee
do numbers give
after a life well spent
worshipping her dimpled knees?

16 September 2004

=====

Never recovered from my industrial past
though grass they say works wonders
but who are they who say such things
and who am I to let them gull me

I was cinder and bakelite and slag
old-fashioned modernist and creosote
and kept trying to get you to love me
on old-fashioned telephones and trains

we were too close for aviation
too far to walk, love always is
a broken bridge in winter and the sun
rising over the refinery, brightness inside brightness.

17 September 2004

=====

And that says enough. Darling. Get married to three other guys. Remember nothing. Everything we ever did together, some other couple or triple is doing right now. No lick is lost. Over the Jersey meadows a Japanese sunset shimmers. Art contrives everywhere. Don't worry, you don't need me. We don't need us. And what I need swings off any bus. What we gave or give each other is tumultuous arrivals, nada mas. Is that Spanish? Nobody here to answer. Let there be an end to questions.

17 September 2004

PARROT

But suppose it really could speak
new words you never heard before

and dabbled around your house all day
cursing your incomprehension? A word

is so easy to understand, just hold it
in your mouth a while while things go on

and soon enough you'll get the taste of it,
swallow, women you haven't seen in years

will call on your new cellphone and everything
will start again. Someone at the door.

That's what they mean by understanding.

17 September 2004

=====

Listing, then lasting.

Certainties dry up. Arroyos.
Feedback of images
from jungle systems,
high ground poverty
I know you, you are hill
and climbing it hard
in hot weather,
you are trolley car
and vacant lot on me,
men lost in reverie,
a father, a bar room,
a book about the sky.

O give me something
to remember
that I never lived,

my lesbian nights
the way I chanted
all the Meccan suras

all night in Isfahan.
Tell me the sea
is full of names

and I know them all.
And the moon
is my flashlight.

17 September 2004

EAST ANGLIA

Suppose a word were
or a wer-weir
swallowing kayaks
spun whitewatering
beneath the common
street, waiting,
for me, there?
Would it be 'you?'

18 September 2004

=====

cold hurricane
rain here
hard all night
started right
after Beethoven's
seventh, crazy
drum rolls
summoning it
over East America

wet listening
to the geography
of weather

map us by what we hear.

18 September 2004