

11-2004

novD2004

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Some nights I write all night  
while I'm asleep and never know  
where the words are when I wake

I guess they go to you, the way yours  
come to me and I write them down  
while you are sleeping

and think they are my own,  
it must be like that, yes,  
since half of everything I read

seems so familiar  
I can smell my sleeping skin  
as I turn each page.

11 November 2004

=====  
Where are the places too  
that I remember, the gone ones,  
the gaieties?

Haymarket  
when it was full of meat,  
Rhinelanders' delicate iron  
terraces.

Nothing is as was.  
Of course. But all that grief  
is stored in me  
as loveliness.

What to do  
with the whole Brooklyn Navy Yard  
brick-walled and sun-filled in my head?

I am an admiral of that doomed fleet  
that sets out every day and gets nowhere.

Nowhere but here.  
I run the world and have no time for me.

11 November 2004

## **SPÄTHERBST**

Everything is a different color today.

Or none.

And sparrows on it, and finches  
that once were gold. And no more leaves.

11 November 2004

=====

Be simple, Phaedra.

You want what's wrong,  
it makes you want it more.

I never had a family,  
I wouldn't know.

11 XI 04

=====  
*after Kendra Urdang*

1.

**In these openings**

insert my head  
and look around.  
The thing I smell  
is sort of God.

It is what I am for  
and where I'm from,  
the other side of being  
from which life's on loan.

2.

Stop now. Be here.  
Inhale the noises  
until between my ears  
something like a name

begins to speak, the smell  
names me,  
but I can't hear yet,  
so much in love with the feel.

3.

There is a city  
north of anywhere  
Beyond the openings

the Iroquois called it  
on their way through autumn  
leaves looking for me.

11 November 2004

## SAGITTARIUS

What feels inside me  
as if an archer  
sighting at the sky

somewhere up there  
is the one point he must strike  
with his only arrow

This point is the same color  
same texture as all the blue—  
you can't look for it

you can only find it  
at the tip of your last arrow.  
Let it go. Maybe it

will know the way.

11 November 2004



## ARMISTICE DAY

Things stopping.  
Things remembering.  
Too many.

Forgetting is a sexy game,  
fun in the bathtub  
everything gone.

The sound  
your whole life makes  
singing away down the pipe

towards the great mingling  
modern people call the Sea  
but Romans knew as deity

a goddess, Cluacina,  
her shrine the brick arch  
of the great sewer

lady of where all things go.

11 November 2004

=====

Examine the evidence –  
some god set it moving  
some ship brought us here  
where we get to do our choosing.

But why such speculations?  
Could we be anywhere but where we are,  
isn't history just a dream we keep discussing,  
haven't we always always been right here

just you and me, *lantslaint* of the same idea?

\*

When the shtetl was the moon  
the birds were talking,  
all we thought we were thinking  
was just the birds talking,

and philosophy was your cousin's nightie  
making mysterious and pretty  
her body underneath  
mysterious and pretty by itself

but in a different way, such a different way.

\*

I don't think these are answers  
at least not the ones you want,

I wake up every morning  
into a different world

and you do too,  
no deity and no Darwin,

the changes have been there  
from the beginning,

we make the city with our eyes.

12 November 2004

=====

Of course this particular  
gold finch turns  
out to be a dead leaf

but an elm leaf  
from trees we thought were all gone  
half a dozen wars ago.

12 November 2004

## MORALITY

For years I've kept wondering  
where the rabbit went  
when Alice woke up.

We should make it our business to write  
a sober, improving Victorian tale  
about the Actual Rabbit

and what he was up to while Alice snoozed.  
How he ate the mushrooms  
grew and diminished, grew old and very young

and went out walking,  
went out wooing, proliferated,  
went to town.

And then one day he saw a man  
wearing a bunny skin cap.  
From then on he changed his religion,

sat in the mountains,  
never went to church, never to market,  
left all his wives and all his swivings

and thought himself right out of the book.

12 November 2004

## NEW ENGLAND PORTRAIT

*for Nora Wellcome*

And the other skins are always waiting,  
crusts of bread, crumbs on the vapid face  
of Hawthorne's bonny son. How pale  
we look before the years. Anyone seeking  
evidence for or against reincarnation need  
look no further than the American Child –  
a face to which nothing ever happened  
since the dawn of time, yet a character  
minutely practiced in the skills of greed.  
“Everything, everything,” my young nanny sighed,  
I have tried all my life to obey her smoking lips.  
To kiss then when I could in you or you.  
And where did that desire come from  
that so imprinted me? How could a slim  
brunette New Hampshire Frenchie  
create a whole man, her nineteen years  
beget my scores and scores? It all  
happens in a dream. And all our sorrow  
comes when we wake up and know  
the dreams we come from are not the same.

12 November 2004

## **Euhemerus, please**

take away the gods if you must  
but don't take away the stories.

We live by those.

And surely from the stories themselves  
a wiser age  
will resurrect the gods again.

Which is one other meaning of the Great Return.

But take away the stories and leave astronomy,  
king lists, history and we have nothing.  
The stars burn out and leave the general night.

12 November 2004

## WRITING

How different each notebook feels,  
the feel of what is possible to say  
changes with the paper, with the pen.

What leaves and filaments we are,  
blown in the wind from an unknown country.

12 November 2004 **SM**



=====

Blossom. Bluet.

Nada now.  
The snow knows  
where they are.

How quick winter seems.

12 XI 04

## CANCION DESPERADO

My eyes need another sea.  
Island is land enough.  
Sea sees a change.

Change me,  
I am tired of all this loving,  
stolen kisses, borrowed wings.

The strange hurried orchestra  
a drowning man hears  
will concert my requiem right here.

Come up from music changed—  
was it my throat that sang?

12 November 2004

=====

Against this new snow  
the darting squirrel looks as big as a fox.  
Grey = black = red.  
The colors have gone south for winter.  
Or west into the rock.  
I am in fact the river Nile.

12 November 2004

=====  
Despair, or something like it,  
something close to being far,  
a now not yet.

Listen,  
she told me again, there is nothing  
left for you to hear.

A parcel concealed  
under a hedge. Containing what?  
Something alive  
the way anything is.

Light time, horses,  
four of them on a snowy field.  
They are mine now because I saw them,  
  
they belong already to what I know.

12 November 2004

=====

Doing it every day is doing it right.  
Now it is just like the grey pen with turquoise ink  
I had when I was twelve or so.  
How could I forget the year,  
I lived through all of it  
with a book in front of me, and snow,  
and peach gum sticky on my fingertips.

12 November 2004