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BREAKING YOGA

Asperity. Breaking yoga
you find yoga inside.

Break 'inside' and you find yoga,
not hiding, not revealing,
there, inside inside and inside outside,

yoga. You want to break yoga
so you don't have to do anything anymore.

Go ahead, just try not to do.
Only yoga can help you do nothing.

4 December 2004

INVOKING

I call you by a different name
but you still come.
I think with the arrogance of a god
that my voice has the power
to summon you,
 you come
to my beautiful voice
whenever I call you.

But really you come
because you hear a baby crying.
You come because some baby's crying
and it has to be yours.

4 December 2004

(alchemy as euphony as dementia)

I always want to be able
to say the first thing that comes into my head.
Even if when I am even older and greyer
they might think I'm losing it,
the little mind I ever had,
I'll still let my tongue think for me,
let the golden word find its
own way out of the gutter of my mouth.

4 December 2004

SADHANA

This word I brought home
from India twenty years ago,
my *sadhana*, the thing I do
that does me,

that veils me with truth
and changes my identity—
I fail by success
and live by dying.

4 December 2004

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This little Chinese fountain pen
that barely writes, never really wrote,
still can scratch some words out,
the perfect instrument for me
to annotate my pilgrimage,
to remember the markets of Darjeeling
and try to tell this afternoon what happened.
And who thinks he's writing it down.

4 December 2004

from HERMES

So if image and percept arise
from color, images crystallize
out of color, as from the fascinated
eye studying flames or waves or a
livid bruise on someone's skin
faces or forms appear,

so from
image we rise to primal bruise,
from bruise to color, from color perhaps
we can rise to the first known,
the noetic, the intelligible
void of any phantasms

μη σχημα, μη χρωμα, ζητων θεασασθαι, αλλ εκεινο
μαλλον το τουτων ποιητικον

*not trying to see shape or color, but rather that by which those
things are made*

–Cyril, ‘quoting’ Hermes, in Scott, I, 542-543.

THE ARROW

after a fragment by Honein ibn Ishaq in Scott's Hermetica, Volume III.

The arrow that will slay you
has already left Death's bow

how long before it finds its mark?
What dance will you do to make it miss?

Or where will I hide? Or is this ignorance
a shield the wise men know?

And every question a distraction
to slow its flight?

4 December 2004

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ενωσις γαρ τουτων [sc. λογος et νους] εστιν η ζωη.
Poemandres 6. Scott I,116.

It turns out that it is man [ανθρωπος] who revealed to ‘downward-tending nature’ the beautiful form of the god.

και εδειξε τη καταφωρει φυσει την καλην του Θεου μορφη.
Poemandes 14, Scott I, 120

But not enough in flowing down
this Person was in-loved-with by nature
the more-and-more-ing
of instances of mind

The image is whatever has been imagined.

We are caught on the wheel.

4 December 2004

HILARY'S CAROUSEL

She watched and didn't ride,
a child born to pour light into words
she stood and watched
the big hard animals turn and turn,

the glass-eyed dolls she worshipped
that stood arrayed around the middle
they stood still too, just like her,
she watched them too, and knew

her difference from everyone at all.

4 December 2004

STATES

Dreamless sleep (= I'm busy in a different
cosm) yields sometimes to dream (busy
in other coins of this one) or into
[phantasms of] anxiety where I am stuck
right here, caught among all the do and not do
must and must not, hurry hurry, but
lie there powerless to do ought but perpend.
No respondo. I witness my life plight
as if from afar yet my innards churn
as if I were really here, and now. As if
I were in the midst not on the marge.

Then there is Waking – made up
from all of the above, plus you.

5 December 2004

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Look at the yellow roses still
I am allowed none of this to say
because the vernacular is forbidden again
by the Poetican, the language 'of flesh
and blood' machined to fine
tolerances of unmeaning, I love that too
but I have something to say to you,
something about the roses, yellow, morning,
all the stupid beauty that endures
past theory and atrocity, the things
that say I am a dream and you are dreaming me.

5 December 2004

=====
Leave alone. Let the conquistador
wash up on his islands, the arts
administrator revive the retro-
trash she needs to make the now-
negating statements all museums
seem to live for. Today ago.

Now never sells. Cannot be bought,
and by the time they package it
it's dust, Pompeii, your aunt's
church calendar with Saint Andrew
dying on a crisscross crucifix
over her gateleg table bearing one
nameless baby's long ago bronze shoe.

5 December 2004

=====

How frail I am or why,
a little too much salt and down I go
or need a bite of something
before we hit the pillow,
muddle of the day. Now tell me:
who am I telling this to?

5 December 2004

=====

Margins ερωτος margins blue hydrangeas
sunlight answers all questions with assurance
saying Touch me while I last. Looking
deep into the woods, all the bare branches
weave eventually a curtain of pale obscurity
that looks like smoke or haze. Deep in there.
Everything goes there, gone in the forever trees.

5 December 2004

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[dream text:]

=====

Dawn's fingers clenched
*[clutching
the rim]*
ready to fall.

5.a.m.
6 December 2004

=====
Where does the dream fit
inside the little box of waking?

Was it something your mother gave you
from beyond the grave, as they say,
though why would anything be there
in particular, past the iron angels
and the blunt crosses made of stone
to look like logs? What if you're not
a magus or a Rosicrucian, how ever
will you understand these pictures
you wake up with between your ears?

Daytime religions provide no explanations.
Just commandments, anxieties and wrath
—enough for most of the people most
of the time, but what of the night?
And who is that watchman? Let's say
dreams are no more than the movies—
yet you show them to yourself, you made them
maybe, downloaded them from bedlam
but who knows. And while you watch
you are no one but the watcher.

You are the night. But now the morning
sprawls around you, houses, trucks,
the ordinary miracles of space unpacked
and you can't quite get it yet, can't get
to the street with your head so full of
pictures. The world was ransacked
while you slept and all the necessary things
are missing out here now but still in you.

You walk around as if you were in a museum,
scratching yourself, your hands cold, waiting
for the coffee to brew, feeding the birds,
not understanding one single thing you see.
What else can you do till things catch up with you?

6 December 2004

=====
Now it is, and before it was, Hermes
said another thing. Listen to me
and I will explain (he said) the attitude
suitable for a young man to maintain
when listening. Hear wisdom.
He looks like this. (Holds
eyes half opened, sits upright
on his hard chair, knees touching.)
And then he lets his mind
dwell on anything that comes along.
Dwell. Dwell.

Dwell in what passes –
that is the way,
catch the eyes just as they take hold
and fold all their seeing
back onto themselves
and then go further
sightless into knowing
until, withdrawn from the object,
they suddenly see.
The spectral presences of day.

Don't see what is there.
See what you can,
what is in you to be seen.

6 December 2004

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But I wonder:
there is always under.
I train my intellect to go down
low, to the lowest altar
and there I find it, the sacrament,
the lost one, the never spoken word

we are born hearing. There,
where the mind disappears
between the mountains.
I have thought my way there
so many times. Under Sinai.
The sun at midnight.

6 December 2004
End of NB 271