

12-2004

## decF2004

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## DREAM OF THE ROCK

Stood on the rock  
and explained rock.

Picked up small rocks  
that explained  
where I had come from

where I must go.  
Gravity, light, weight,  
heat, Weak Force,

the rocks fell  
into the explained world

kept happening  
all round me

faster than explanation  
the snow of things.

This  
was Sisyphus –

any rock,  
no hill needed,

no hill needed  
just a rock

no pushing, no pulling  
no falling back,

just a rock  
to pick up  
and then another

hold it on  
on the palm of the hand

the balance is there  
inside the rock

the hand finds it  
the explanation sleeps.

21 December 2004

=====  
And this is solstice,  
the sun a stone  
balanced.

How long it took me to realize  
the dream I had on solstice was a solstice dream,

showed all.  
Even down in the corner  
a tiny figure:  
me, explaining  
the picture to a friend  
and then – beyond  
the picture frame –  
to you all

in the picture every  
image held  
in balance.  
The balance.

21 December 2004

=====

Midnight  
voices on tv  
eight fishermen  
lost at sea  
off Nantucket  
last night  
in zero weather  
I smell the lilies  
in Betty's kitchen  
a smashed boat  
somewhere  
in the dark sea  
the Coast Guard  
has combed fifteen  
thousand square miles  
not so cold tomorrow.

21 December 2004  
Boston

===== [dream]

Cornelia Street the old apartment  
modernized now with a corner  
chopped off to make a terrace  
and our gay host seemed  
not to know it had been Gerrit's place  
those years ago (it hadn't, it wasn't  
Gloucester, it was Manhattan,  
28 Cornelia Street, the back house  
built 1805 a slum, a toilet  
with a kitchen beside it, mattresses  
on the floor, not Gerrit,  
Charles O'Malley, the reverend, S.P.R.  
and all, the priest, where I met  
among so many) so now I was

and was now on the roof of the building  
which abutted seamlessly the natural urban landscape  
lots and gullies and streams of rain water run off and all  
all of it, empty lovely in a love among the ruins way  
and I walked, in sandals, wading when I wanted,  
wondering about eels and rats, liking the morning,  
licking the sunshine off the sky,

then from where I stood on top of the house  
I could see in the middle distance this house I stood on  
—and just then Charlotte came to me  
carrying a pan of filleted fish  
a trout from the size of the pale raw pieces  
she'd caught this morning in the Sawkill  
far from here and ready for the fire.

22 December 2004, Boston

=====  
Find the poetry  
in the telling?

The poetry of the dream  
lost on waking,  
find it again  
in the way of telling?  
Invention of poetry.

That's all that poetry must do:  
claim the dream.  
Everything else is propaganda.

22 December 2004  
Boston

=====

Watching China in Spanish  
is a little like a dream.  
Channel 884.

The sado-masochistic grammar of Gaelic.  
The sea wind blowing in at Waikiki.

22 XII 04, Boston



=====  
Anything I remember  
is an animal.

Becomes a living thing  
runs around the  
house I have for a head.

Daytime moonrise  
the orb like smoke.

A sign on me  
and what I mean.

Sometimes I wish a simple thing,  
a cigarette, a rock.

But a rock no one ever sat or stood on,  
a rock for me  
to stand up on  
as night slips down over the world

and I stand on my rock  
and breathe the way I want –  
this, this is religion.

22 December 2004  
Boston

## THE PHYSICS OF LANGUAGE

The apertures  
or my small Elves  
these winter butterflies

or elegant electrons  
going to church morning and even  
around their nuclear pronoun.

\*

We will find in the end  
that there are as many ‘subatomic’ particles  
as there are pronouns.

*The sentence*  
maps itself forever

or at least until all parts of speech  
in all languages have met and loved and bred—  
predicated each other, conjugated,  
and been predicated by. Only then  
might the sentence end.

That is the meaning of Schwarzschild’s famous Black Hole, as his  
contemporary, the chemist Primo Levi so poignantly intuited: the  
period towards which The Sentence is hurrying even now.

23 December 2004  
Boston

## THE PHYSICS OF LANGUAGE, 2

What is Torah?

A girl named Lisa said “A Bible on a stick.”

What is Torah?

A man without a Jew said

There is a single sentence the world speaks—

Torah is the underlying grammar of what it says.

Or,

all the words that can be written by all the ink an elephant could carry – and still the sentence is only beginning.

23 December 2004

Boston

=====

Things along the way to being  
touch me in the night.

A dream or a pillow.

Who can tell how long the road is  
before it talks.

24 December 2004

=====  
But I was waiting,  
I had shallow thoughts  
like an asthmatic breathing,

I had hands  
but they were like sticks on fire  
two or five or ten flames  
adding everything up by consuming it.

But I was waiting,  
I had no idea,

I knew nothing  
and that made me wiser than anybody  
and very quiet

like a gourd on the ground  
and the ants had gone in for the winter.

Very wise  
like sunshine on the lawn  
before the snow  
and after it again.

24 December 2004

<LATTICE OF THE TONGUE>

[staring up at middle distance mountains...]

*[text picks up in the middle of discourse:]*

...trees. Dangerous to be among trees, one for each person in your life, one for each fear. There is a waterfall up there, you can see it from here

*[here the dreamer, awakened by the text he was hearing, and having gotten up and scribbled those words down, went back to bed, dozed into the 'same' dream. Language went by he tried to track, then was jolted awaker by the next phrase, got up to write it down:]*

the dance of language is the flash around the frame

– the flash of light

the openness or emptiness from which language speaks is impersonated in the visual field (the visual world) by light. White. The mist above the winter lake in the Berkshires. The waterfall (you can see it from here).

*[the dreamer is almost fully awake now, in the kind of dream called 'thinking.']*

Dream stuff. Waking is an invention. Making a new day out of the scraps of the last. Out of the must of dream. The musth of dream, crimson silken lust and elephant stampede.

Back to the image: a vista  
not too distant, of blue hills and trees and one

waterfall up there like smoke that you can see from here. Not sparkling clear, more like smoke.

Seeing it in dream as I am doing is a little like looking through the knothole at Duchamps' last work, "The Fountain of Blue Gas" as the dream-mind names it, secure from inspection in the Philadelphia museum. Please visit it and bear me in mind.

When you look at those far hills  
you will feel my voice also  
in your body  
resonating with your own.

As if two languages shared one mouth  
one voice  
and that's what makes the body *be*,  
come into existence like smoke from fire.

But if the body is smoke  
what is the fire?  
(Where's the fire?)

Unless the fall of water you can see from here  
is really a rise of smoke,  
then all the hillside is a quiet fire,  
rocks and trees for flames.

I knew trees were dangerous,  
a lot of them, one for each name.

(All the names in your life  
the set of which you are a member,  
the rememberer. and in this forest  
your destiny is lodged, your doom  
roaming towards you, wild beast,

and you towards it, no tamer,  
the names will slay you  
and still not say the Name.)

But after that fire (that thinking)  
after it (body, hillside, waterfall,  
flash of light behind and beside the image,  
frame flicker, flashdance of light *against*  
the image of anything the light reveals,

flashdance of emptiness against the evidence  
any spoken word proposes, light against  
image, silence against word)

after it, after waking, there is the blue flame  
of the gas range in the kitchen, the blue flame  
beneath the water,  
blue as Novalis' flower, as my hydrangeas  
(Count Robert's hortensias)

blue as this.

Standing in the kitchen and looking reverently at the blue flame, I  
recovered one more secret of the alchemists. The flame is burning  
oxygen out of atmosphere, rescuing the eternal nitrogen from the  
sharp give and take of breathing systems, beasts, us. The air is a  
plant, almost.

Nitrogen feeds flowers, oxygen feeds humans. That is the  
difference. Earth is a beautiful blue balance of two spiritually  
divergent super-races or biota, animal and vegetable. An uneasy  
balance, as my blue flame reported.

I lay there listening to the dream talk. And then I supposed that I  
was writing down these words I was hearing, which were



coincident with what I was seeing, words simply telling what was there before me, and I was simply writing down what I heard. After a time, as the words themselves caught my interest, I realized that I was only dreaming a pen in my hand, only dreaming a paper, and that I would have no evidence to submit to the court later, on waking, to prove where I had been.

Testing where I had been.

So I got up in the dark and found my pen and started writing in the wake world. But now I didn't hear the words. I was just seeing them as my hand wrote them in the skimpy light of just before dawn. And now I wasn't seeing the hills, trees, waterfall – just seeing the words.

One thing takes over from another, drives it out. Members, dismembers, remembers. It was the phrase *flash of light around the frame* that really woke me from writing to writing it down.

25 December 2004

*[As I was waking, I thought that this that I'd been dreaming, writing, thinking, was part of the Physics of Language piece – though it doesn't seem so now – and that this part of it was also called something like The ~~Lattice~~ of the Tongue.]*

## THE TRANSLATOR

*for Charlotte, Christmas 2004*

moves from earth to heaven  
meeting on her way  
the descending regiments of angels  
come to celebrate a birth

but who knows whose?  
everybody's born today  
everybody uncurls in hay  
under the mother's smile

even if the mother's role  
is played by a tree or a cloud.  
But the translator's way  
carries all this information

up where it can be processed  
by the mind of God,  
that reader, who might otherwise  
know nothing of all this

agonies and interludes and *Magic Flutes*  
and might just think that nitrogen  
and oxygen were dancing down below  
with nothing but their molecules,

the reader might not know  
that every text can be lifted up  
to show the skeleton of sense  
and all the mushroom webs of inference

down here below the hegemonic  
word. So it's up to her  
to let the angels and their office know  
the real identity of that child

man woman adult animal bird  
the everliving life they praise.

25 December 2004

=====  
There are pieces of understanding  
locked in the broken mirror  
the whole glass knows nothing of

We are turned  
by the desire of another  
*malicieux et superbe*

whose high refusals  
prick us into deed  
by which we come to know

(deathbed confession)  
time's bitterest arrow  
is notched to our own bow

and we send our life from us  
fast over the apple tree  
to fall in the shadow

of someone else's body  
breaking the shared light.

25 December 2004

=====  
What shall they tell me  
of the night?

Nobody who knows  
anything about the night says  
'shall' anymore. The night  
is modern, is the future,  
is where every ardent lover  
goes to slake his thirst with fire.  
Things wait for me there  
among the bougainvillea flooding  
down from Susan's terrace.

We never forget those who wanted us,  
never hate them, but never forgive.  
Desire is the deepest wound they do.  
Or oleander at the railroad station,  
or a cloud shaped like zeppelins  
coming in over the Bodensee.

But this is Hudson. No Germany.  
No 'shall.' And the past tense of shit  
is shit, not shat. And a Welshman  
wears a leek in his cartoon hat.  
And why is this Christmas?  
Because Love read it in a book  
some Arab write a Portuguese  
put in Latin for an Italian  
to lose his heart to, he fell  
in love with every girl who passed,

so called himself Love's Faithful One  
because love is what he was always

faithful to, *i Fideli d'Amore*. Kings  
and mountebanks, poets, poets.

Tamers of horses.  
Every one of them  
dead for a song.

25 December 2004