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IF THEY COULD BELIEVE IN ME

if they could believe in me

I could wake up from dreaming

there would be thyme as well as heather

there would be roads yes

but swamps too of preposterous orchids

and somewhere a chemical or stone

half buried in the ground

that would explain the malevolence of men.

28 January 2003

Boston

When something's foaming up in the glass
instead of clapping my palm over the top of it
I just watch it foam over the countertop the floor

Just watch. Fear or stupidity or bold
desire? How can I know what it means about me
that it lets what happens happen?

28 January 2003

Boston

ALL THESE ROLL BY

A torn trestle harms a marsh river
engine fall. Setauket though,
evening luminescence loin of lagoons
a god stripped only
but it holds. Red ball
we see cheese heaped high on Edam barges
we see what is there for us to see
a vernacular beauty
left over from a book
can this be the world
they meant when you first heard?
What did you imagine when you woke?

Pipe organ metatarsal pain
look now how her hands hold him
as he peers over the rim of the caldera
there is a crater in the middle of the world
from which pain upwells
she holds him at the rim he nods
flicker out of focus, you see too much,,
down there a turbulent desire:

the middle of anything rushes to the margin

burning lava sloshes into the ice-choked sea
it's all geology all this pain
of how it breaks and where the fractures lead
pottery crackle on the throw of time

a broken wall you still can't climb
what time is it? a century gone by
maybe I should have told you my story
now what will we do
you are so far from where I am trying to
maybe I should still try it always
hurts by leaving you alone
it always ends no one wants to know me
this is the darkest isn't
it the moon knocking on the window
to be let out, old pastry
glum showcase of the Irish baker
or how I spent the night with Jesus
broiling in his garden and the cross
for him and life for me and that confuses
a kid like me, how can he die
and we went on living here we are
even a keen-witted girl
with a hole in the butter
into which the heat of the day
presses till the green leaf
spills inside and people looking
up from the table cry Spring! and you
just think a somber German song
that always says the same thing
over and over all the pain still in it.

29 January 2003

WOODPECKER

Woodpecker at the ash means war
oak a king's in trouble
but no oak here, no king
and linden tree means family matters
the tragedy of loving you

or all the instances of morning
always coming back
punchdrunk from dream

for strife is a sound from the sky
men hear and obey
no hope of peace only women
hear a different color

but just try to reason with a bird.

29 January 2003

THE CROW

The crow is glad to call
and I to listen

there are veins that run
through rock and air
and meet us here

the current in my arms
runs down from you
please believe me
we mountain each other

each person is a gap
through which the other
flows or winds

until the air is knotted
in us and each
is intrinsically everybody

which is why a man has to live
at the margin of himself
until you call

you hear the voice of the other
at the core of the self
you make your way in

and finding you is finding me
delicate in our difference
the sun asleep in clouds.

29 January 2003

[Dream Text: 7:15 a.m. 30.I.03]

Tell

beak

say

flow

these words

wind through

the delta

of a common text

something someone says

Sainte Thérèse or just

a girl in a garden

kneeling tall

the picture

remembers something

her smile

not what we see

tell beak say flow

symmetry

supposed to be sedative

woke me

a church

across the street

wakes you up

wakes everybody up

there is something

uneasy to see

or seeing

church or mosque or

synagogue

along the way

agent of a foreign power

a mystery with bells.

30 January 2003

KLIMT'S DANAE

As much as we can
so come
it valleys me
you too
a cloud of gold
clatters in your lap

dense cloud
lit with pipistrelle
dark with gleams
of crepuscule
bad languages
turned to gold

I steal your words
you too
interrogate
nervously
my obvious
intentions

standing flustered
human hallway
that's all I am
a corridor
through which I mean

you to flow

you too
intend me

we are silk handkerchiefs
knotted into one
another
when a building
becomes music

staircase of the ear
I climb inside
opening the dark

gold tongue
speaks sunset
into you

right? night
you know
night is a treasury
where the sun is stored

into you we
spend the light
in your lap
history of the simplest
words
comes to taste us

test us
property? we own

each other
only, it is
a moment
a clumsy ecstasy
proposed

a coin
falls through the air
it is a sphere
of light
tunnels through us
a darkness shared.

30 January 2003

THE NEW ASTROLOGY

catches up with people
where they don't live

but will they will
be mine I will be your

answer here is my will
here is your testament.

New constellations have appeared:

The Motorboat

The Year 1929

The Hook (Arabic *al-haq*)

The Burning Telephone

The Wedding Ring

Consider the Motorboat rising over the trees.

Judgment: You have been reading old novels. In each of them France figures in an appealing way. Lawyers wearing odd collars. You make a grammatical mistake. You wake up. There is someone in bed with you wearing a perfume you have never smelled, certainly not the night before.

The Image: A motorboat. It's filled with people in late youth, wearing white clothes. You call it a motorboat because you're old. They call it a boat because no other sort occurs to them as relevant to the bodies they wear to step on board. In white clothes. The boat, or motorboat, comes chugging, a kind of dying chainsaw slicing through the placid lagoon of Ogden's Bay under the big white house that has been empty a hundred years. Dogs free for the moment from other responsibilities bark at the boat. The boat plays music back. Music and motor, meaning and noise, which is which, woven together, each worse than the other, and the barking. For once I'm on the side of the dog.

But wait. What am I doing here. This is about an image, which must say itself without my chaperoning presence.

On a clear night you can see most of the above above. Even me sometimes, and the dogs. Look south, over the mortal refinery. At midsummer's eve the central star of The Motorboat (β Autonavis) will seem to pause exactly atop the no-longer-functioning cracking tower to the left, that is if you're standing on Peterson's back porch and it's eight o'clock EDT, and not raining, and God has given you back your memory and your love for simple things that belong to everyone, like a sidewalk.

Until that time you have to wonder
who owns the fucking sky.

The remedy is on everybody's lips.

Kiss them one by one (persons, not lips, it is awkward if interesting to kiss one lip at a time).

The remedy is all of them

and your eldest sister Gertrude explained the year you were born

that our American business is to be gone, no staying, no hanging around, not what we're meant for. Get out of town.

Move it, get moving. You mutter it
half to yourself, half to the stars.

30 January 2003

My business
is to be
elsewhere
at home.

30 I 03

LET THE AMERICAN FOUNDLING SPEAK

What gasp of forest language
still's left under Spanish under English
mountain language raft language
left in the warm mouth
Aladdin's cave
keeper of the law
the jewel beneath the tongue
that is the tongue

Chile Bolivia Andes
Appalachia born again Chicago
there is nowhere you belong
because it all belongs to you
slow language under hasty conquistadors
the continent fits you like your skin
it is your skin
there is no one here but you
and we are the opaque watchers in your dream
stunned by our silence by our greed

we took away your speech and made you poor
this is one single action
and it continues, listen hard as you like
you'll hear nothing in your head

but our babble. But if you listen *down*
if you taste the silence in your chest
and cough, the old word might come out
born in pain in the first place
we all are, it is,
pain is the only democrat we have

sine death, that other, has us
and not much use in dying
when you never lived
with a word of your own
to prophesy the feel of your skin the grip of your hands
the wild cantina between your legs,
I will shout my bullshit to you
till you find your word
and say it back to me, all of us
the garbage of our common affection for the Thing,
the anger in your eyes you turn on me
trying to forgive us both.

31 January 2003

POIESIS

It is a sort of channeling
not from some other but from
the animal inside

not me, me is the usurper
of what is mine,
the elegant animal who knows

who bites my dream and sleeps me
so I can wake
his voice in me

gravity of the actual
lit by the splendor of the possible
until I mumble in astonishment

and overhear and write it down
like a man falling easy through the air
every page my epitaph, his canticle.

31 January 2003

ENGLYN

“The motorway was loud with Chinese whispers”

girls with car kisses tease

boys with animal results

geese hiss by in mocking vees.

31 January 2003

(stammer, a translation after Luca, in Deleuze, 110)

passion a now it knows me passiman

I you low you I

I high low low loose

love low you pass and love

you I love you passionately.

31 January 2003

I make my body

it is tall and big to be conspicuous

so people will look at me

so they'll pay attention

it is fleshy bulky armored

to keep them from touching me

it is strong so I can hold them to me

my legs are not long since I'm not going anywhere

my eyes are myopic because everything I love is right here in front of me

her skin this book

31 January 2003

to yourself. We shall note in passing that allegory, that so spiritual type of art, which the clumsiness of its painters has accustomed us to despise, but which is really one of the most primitive and natural forms of poetry, regains its divine right in the intelligence which is enlightened by intoxication. Then the hashish spreads itself over all life; as it were, the magic varnish. It colours it with solemn hues and lights up all its profundity; jagged landscapes, fugitive horizons, perspectives of towns whitened by the corpse-like lividity of storm or illumined by the gathered ardours of the sunset; abysses of space, allegorical of the abyss of time; the dance, the gesture or the speech of the actors, should you be in a theatre; the first-come phrase if your eyes fall upon a book; in a word, all things; the universality of beings stands up before you with a new glory unsuspected until then. The grammar, the dry grammar itself, becomes something like a book of "barbarous names of evocation." The words rise up again, clothed with flesh and bone; the noun, in its solid majesty; the adjective's transparent robe which clothes and colours it with a shining web; and the verb, archangel of motion which sets swinging the phrase. Music, that other language dear to the idle or the profound souls who seek repose by varying their work, speaks to you of yourself, and recites to you the poem of your life; it incarnates in you, and you swoon away in it. It speaks your passion, not only in a vague, ill-defined manner, as it does in your careless evenings at the opera, but in a substantial and positive manner, each movement of the rhythm marking a movement understood of your soul, each note transforming itself into Word, and the whole poem entering into your brain like a dictionary endowed with life.