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WAITING IN A LINE FOR SOMETHING

this sun has not risen
a defect in the mechanism
sent a great black bird instead
ice in her feathers she
spreads it over the treefold east

the kind your father called a witch of a morning
but you knew better, you always
knew better, you assassin of the given,
hopeless hobbledehoy of toppling the father
stepfather lookalike inlaw
prof policeman theologian, you
loved the witches in their silk clothes
you knew it was an Ice Bird and still is

natural, disastrous as wind
and maybe blind. But she found
her place in the mass book,
knows what tree to perch in,
the road to this mousy little planet
and shields now your trees from the crescent light

its screech echoes in your conversation
and people shun you though they love you,
very strange, I think you smell like her.

1 February 2003

=====

it could be a knife or a fruit
something size a hand could have
or let go without trouble

something that falls
and another one picks up
like a glass that spilled

and maybe water doesn't stain
but still,

1 February 2003

WILL THERE BE TIME

will there be time enough
for me to be somebody else
before I'm no body?

I want to meet old friends
by chance in bad French
restaurants and nobody recognizes

anybody, I want to be the Adam
they don't know me from.
Then after I get to put on

a few more interesting faces
death can put on its own
and I won't recognize her either

in the long sly disguise of gender
till that nice ironic moment
when I smile at her and say Come
home with me and she says I will.

1 February 2003

Ice sky no wonder
out other slippery womb
fall day's maid yells
at it east east

bargain box eats leaves
hour evidence your hair
light there trees here
river you never see

always passing highway sigh
slow weather over town
forget me letters unopened
night same morning cars.

1 February 2003

Combat come back no
peace sudden rain men
sleep around angry dreams
camp fires go out

1 February 2003

CANDLEMAS

But the man hasn't spoken
the man in the star
who came with a law
said there are no laws more
and stepped back into the mirror
now let him speak

or is it a girl
the voice has no timbre
I can't tell
one word from the other
what sort of body is the bell
that tolls each sound
waking men or funeral

every word
means the opposite of what it says

go to the star
and bring her down
if she is there
Stella by Estherlight
a Persian person
with green eyes

as if you had a memory!
Jamais! In the garden

Love spreads her picnic
samite cloth on roughedy wood
and her bare toes grazing,
knee together with her sous la table
all French is elementary
and today is water

you need it, the grass is wet
you'll later tumble on
remembering lines of poetry
she made you think
and you are her anthology of grief,
you both want nothing but right now
how could that be wrong
what's now is always all there is

the pleasing vision falters
the mirror clouds
someone is breathing on it
from inside

now let him out
his star is set
he'll leave you his whole language
if you let him go

but it's hard
to let the person exit what is seen
the technology of absence is no easy thrill
close all the eyes you want

you still feel the glass tips of his fingers
you hear his breath in your chest now
opening a way for you to say
whatever plea is on his mind

the crazy hopes of trapped people
I hear beating in me if I sleep.

2 February 2003

FEBRUARY 2003

How long will it be
before they notice
the music stopped?

Unstar, a dark time
or too much light
on a shadowless earth
bad magic maybe
there is an animal
enemy crept
down into the world
whose name is
Make good men do evil.

The devil is sick of monsters
sociopaths rippers ogres,
he wants the thrill of corrupting
comes only from coaxing
decent men to do atrocities

starting with war.
Ethnic cleansing. Capital
punishment. Young
men in prisons.
Old men signing laws.

3 February 2003

POLITICS

if only I could
listen my way
to something clear

to say the situation
that says itself
so busily with blood

these days
about to flow
I want to stop

before it starts
but it's always
already started,

the only tool I have
is listening
and they're screaming.

3 February 2003

OCTAGONS

full of nine-fold lives
octagons full of bees
someone has to listen to me
because it is built into weather
like telephone poles
wood remembers weather
jewels grow inside old books
you never open
the moss of matter
grows so slow
 o why
did I have to mention
you, you brings
me with it
and then I'm here
and won't stop
droning on as
if I were an accordion
and this broken
thing a song.

3 February 2003

PRELUSORY

Nor hastily the broken sword had touched
in truth the scheme the ghostly laborer
designed, nor had the wolf been formed by me
who would go raving in that wood without
uneasy forethought of the pain he'd give,
the censures, the raptureless costumes
his victims would put on, ill-omening
syllables of his ululation, dawn
of those terrible nights all women dread
to whom his manly essence spoke a word
and then fell silent, leaving all worldly
interests in those hands that were so dear
to them so coarse to me. But Nature then
erased the bliss and left anxiety behind
the way she does when the antic chemical
stops shouting in the blood, sleep hurries in
but not soon enough, despondency was
sovereign in my bedroom, long velvet drapes
that dulled the twist and glimmer of my mind.
And mighty forms from out the closet strode
daunting my doze, took on a youthful
shape to trick my fancy, pinned me down
beneath at last a sleep of unknown faces
till dream signed me its phantasmal charter.

A STREET IN BROOKLYN EVIDENTLY

I'll write about the picture not the word
there's only so much ink left in the world
an elephant could carry it all away
on his one arched back
and there I'd be with all my words
staring at your pictures of an ordinary street
in my home town, no elephant
for miles, and without the moisture of the ink
(the *humid path* of my naughty ancestor)
the words dry up and blow away,
nothing to say, hello honey I missed you
where can we, and when, and then
even those are gone and only the picture is left,
a still scene in people in motion
my people, my dusky relatives stumbling along
or dancing that way they do to keep from dying

and you know about the dying part too.
It's all such a struggle, it's all so hard
so grainy, so set against itself
image against image, boy against space,
girl against the twist of light,
people shoving into one another,
I am a crowd, you are a sidewalk,
we are empty, we are ready
for each other, we will never tell the truth,
never ending yearning, all the horny
touch-me-not of light itself

silvering its way into the folds of flesh,
steet sign, steel, everything is folded
image cancels image, my home town,
sometimes you see something and just
want it, you don't care what happens
you want it, to be in it or it in you
or over you or you carry it home in your
arms forever, you live inside it
and you want it and nothing comes
to mind except this wanting,
no words come to mind, nothing
to be said, just this empty street
before us, all wanting and no knowing,
nothing to know, it's all in the picture.

4 February 2003

END OF THE AFFAIR

Shall this be the end of what they do
analyze the unspoken
till they know what they desire?

What good is that? She knows and he does not
and never will. She wants
what she already has, he wants more,

there is no more on her side of the world;
he wants what he cannot name,
which is the same as wanting nothing

in this world, she wants a feel-good mood
a kind of Sunday morning hour,
he wants to spill every minute of the day

drag the nervous system in her body
into his network. His plan.
Obsess her and be obsessed by her

till both of them are wrought beyond themselves
a fine high tragedy of prose,
a blind astronomer feeling his way along

by numerals alone. When they talk
it is a language from beyond this world,
nonsense and tenderness and it shines.
She controls the situation with her silence.

4 February 2003

SOMETHING OR OTHER

like a hawk
heard in fog over your house.
A thing finely seen among the city

to give you. That's enough,
the rumor, the news
of what is suddenly
with us to be known.

Or looked at us and ran away.

4 February 2003

SILENCE LETS

by gap

the way the stars

determined a certain velocity

to *espace* themselves

from one another

till the Expansion

made stereo sense

and we were everywhere.

4 February 2003

GONE TO GIVE SUCH GIVING

cut the apple open
a book falls out
and spreads its wings

You have to read me
you have no choice
I am a love letter
from the moon
louder than daylight
you finger the images
I give you
no choice, you hate me
you clutch me
into your heart

No hearts fingers letters
books apples moons
no you no me
yet something happened
to bring us here
somehow together.

5 February 2003

COLORS

How can I use more words to say it
colors happen to things, only colors
happen in all this world

transactions

with how we see, a vibration, a persuasion,
my mother's eyes rebuking sunset.

5 February 2003

THE LONGEST TWELVE LINE POEM IN THE WORLD

Suppose you got an e-mail from the Pope
how would you kiss its knuckle ring?
Amethyst or pearl? And would you kneel
among the pixels praying for the world,

some three-dimension consequence to tumble
out of the alphabet on your screen
something deep like a spoon or smart like a knife
something you could measure things with or hide in your coat?

O objects are the rarest song
in this subject world, all talk and no telling,
no hill, no wolf asleep among the alder trees dreaming blood.
Do you think you dare tell the Holy Father this?

5 February 2003