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THE ORDER UNDER

Let the order under
renew so from the well
comes up in each
a stream will flow

uncoped by vagrant need.
Anybody can wash
anybody's fee in it
and so be God.

Let the order under
divine arrogant desires
of scarlet people,
a house, a house

evades the question
till it learns to move
as you had to, Lord,
when a voice spoke,

agency is never
natural, the nomad
is the opposite of vagrant
cleaves beast to contour

of the season. Where is grass
the nomad answers.
Nomad deity comes
bent to the ground, touching.

14 February 2003

A THROW OF KNIVES

Apt, a nine. A game
to play with your head,
lay the cards for me

lay me out like cards
and read me random

windows of my soul
that show weather

weather is so heathen
when the rain
will come or sluice my sere
condition, sister,
with your glossing tongue

to tell manacles off my mind.
The variation of particulars
is all song says, earth magic,
dragon magic, breath magic

I breathe on the knots in you
come loose and you can say
all the old words we analyze
by being who we are

free of the least punctuation
cups keep coming up.

14 February 2003

TAROTS

I really do want to read them
for you, on you, you on me,
commas all around the room
to link us, loose us, you
sit on my lap and I read the board
through you, over your shoulder
and through your hair I watch
like a less intelligent animal
the cards shift east and north

as the numbers call them out
slipping over the dining room table
like (forgive the obvious) flounders
bottoming in the lagoon. To feed
on what we see, that's all.

Then tell you what these pictures mean
but less than how this meaning means
to me, these pictures of you
reading the pictures, you being read by me
right now, all human time is
exactly as long as this instant, for us,
all time for us, hence now forever.

Or no forever. Just this. If you can
imagine anything else
that will come true too,
the way water does, eventually
slipping around your ankles

like the thinnest chain of white gold
with a star on it a message a name or two
you hardly know you're wearing
makes you belong to what we both mean.

14 February 2003

STANZAS

economical
they look

parceled out
on the linoleum

counter, tied
with white string

I hate neat
things so why

after all
these years?

The stress
of music

happening
nearby in me

against its witch
I battle

her silken magic
with my numbers

alone, gift
wrapping my

ordinary
disorderly meat.

14 February 2003

TERPSICHORE

Anticipation is one way to translate
Perplexing amplitudes of muscular thrust
Sauntering music on neighbor rooftop
Admire the graceful dancer auditioning for you
Right in the sphincter of your heart, can she hear
All she makes you feel? Isn't the muse of a dancer
Silence itself? Sound happens in you,
Ears' tiny meadows, grasses blow, distant
Sphinxes browse ill-content with what you hear.

14 February 2003

THE TOURISTS IN VIENNA

We watched in crystal hair
a Luvian girl, a democrat
at the brink of a capriole or
somersault say, the way

their pale tradition lets them
leave the earth it seems an hour
without ever leaving the dance
and talked that way too, a drum

in one hand an arrow other
picture me urbane and voluble
trying to make sense of her
only managing to make language

while all the while the dancers
inscribed on Marie-Therese's lawn
markings the doves alone could read
but the air understood, end

of the great Eurasian steppe
right here beneath her bronze knees
each big as priests' heads
so that when Americans breathe in

we knew a special order of mind
neurologized this appealing flesh
we witnessed so blindly, martyrs
of the appalling distances from which

we had not yet perfectly come.

15 February 2003

KITCHEN LATIN

Oh great, now I hear the wall talking
next the ice box will begin to sing
and that's a real owl feather on the sill
inside a window hasn't been opened for months
where do they come from, what to do
with all this information,
make a movie but tell no plot.
we've heard enough stories already,
now spit them out and be blank as Achilles
having to make up his moods from scratch,
'scratch' being a small irritable deity
who secretes the lucid glue that sticks
thoughts together and makes you think they're yours.
So you must be there to think them, you think.
And then you get huffy and hide
in your tent till your mustache grows
or your young breasts full out whichever comes first
and then you're a part of the story. The city.
All this is what I'm trying to spare you
when I reach out to you when you're half awake
for you to drink or whatever, this empty cup
filled nevertheless conscientiously with light.

15 February 2003

AUTOMIMESIS

disturbed symphony

Jeff Scher's *Grand Central*

shadows veer into sound

a place

the morning sun hid for fifty years

of course they show us how to see

and then we imitate

every one a crowd *turba* 'a crowd'

of all my outrances

a little text

I leave in the night

to talk to you

I mean a commentary

each of them

will one day make me speak

hierarch of *Unsinn*

the plant that plants itself in night

whose flower, sudden flower,

cannot be distinguished from morning

the vast eastern window of Grand Central Station

closed for so many commercial years at last

laid open to the Long Island light

creaming in over the East River
from the luminists' lagoons

and the light was pure white light
and it knew us.

We imitate ourselves
we learn to walk
from shadows
we kiss and touch
and move away
and everything we say
we say in movements

we do the things
our bodies tell us
even when there is no
we at all

just shadows pouring from the morning light.

16 February 2003

SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST NICE TO EACH OTHER

the kind of book they don't make any more
count the messages at the nape of your neck
I feel you needing me from far off
are you ready for language doctor
how can I trust anybody who touches me
or doesn't touch me isn't it Easter yet
remarkable silence of birds no calories
to make them sing no heat left for calling
and you call this chatter singing
I wait in a pool of light that seems to chill me
I see to have forgotten everything again
I keep seeing your mouth come near me
choosing at the last moment to kiss me on the mouth
isn't that worth writing down in the sky
isn't that what the moon's been saying all these years
with a funny blue pen like a vein
in an old anatomy book when we were simple
again before Atlantis rose up and stifled us
with provisional information you can't keep
all those synapses in one small forget.

16 February 2003

IT'S JUST ONE MORE

book about Chartres book about God's plan
revealed to the simpering heathens of the Sorbonne
by recovering Abrahamic translating Leviticus

quicksand and periwinkle Venus on the hill
it all comes back to old movies doesn't it
the myths that made us in the common dark.

16 February 2003

CLINAMEN

Carrying a heavy book around from place to place
stitches one place to another, crisis
of preponderant feeling, yesterday's hysteria
shredded over the local sidereal time
when new things get born, have horoscopes,
destinies, ancestors, languages, despairs.
We carry from some former life an inventory
of inclinations, we shape our baby faces
into smiles remembering jokes they told us
a death ago, and cry out loud right now
from the pain of our most recent birth.
The book with no eraser that I try to lose.

16 February 2003

HOW NOT TO GET HURT

Always remember you're tied to this tree.
That way you wont pull it down on top of you
as you struggle in the dark to get free.

It is not the tree that holds you to itself.
It is something, not tree and not me,
long and thin and hard to see, some people

call it the serpent of Eden but these
are just metaphors for something that has
no life of its own, a pure between,

strong, strong, and takes its strength from you and tree.

16 February 2003

UNDER A FORMAL PORTRAIT

As we are so shall we be. More when
we can, less when needs be. But always there,
somehow, sensed close, sensed inside,
a jungle of order for one another, ever
lasting wilderness, a presence
no matter where, a chronic voice
always disclosing. Wonders and treasures,
what lurks beneath the ground of every day
what we give each other by attending to.

16 February 2003

HERESY AT BARNES & NOBLE

Write the book instead to want to read.

Sing the music you want to hear.

What could be simpler this side of fruit trees?

Saint-Saens among the vegetables.

How good everybody looks today.

But almost everybody's overweight.

16 February 2003

