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HUMAN GENDER

Human gender
is the strangest animal there
are boys who want to be with girls
and girls who want them to be
thus want to be girls with boys
who want to be boys with girls

plus there are boys who want to be with boys
and girls who want to be with girls
but there are boys who want to be boys with boys
and boys who want to be girls with boys
while frequently there are boys who want to be boys with girls
there are girls who want to be girls with girls
and girls who want to be boys with girls
but sometimes boys who want to be girls with girls

and after all this beauty there are men
who want none of the above
and far away or over on the other side of them
there are the mothers.

14 March 2003

MESH

Spilled with inner action
a spider web
distracts the sun

Entering phase, orchid.

Named for my tame father
who one night knew me.

Motherless names rootless auguries
scribe too fast to be alive
a morbid scholiast at other people's feet
or knees or even laps between
San Bernardino and the real mountains

I dreamt of you in tolerable snow
waiting finally to curl up in your hacienda
brittle as dog bark, I am tired of not getting
all the deals the words suppose themselves to mean

I am a medical emergency
a man with a sign in his heart.

14 March 2003

THE BOY

Standing in the cellar
the boy could see across tomorrow
into the whitewashed brick tomb-like enclosure
where somebody's wine would be stored
where elegant lean-legged non-noxious insects
would mildly proliferate and monks come
from time to time to sit quietly and breathe
in trouble with their vocation.

And he could see the knees
of women of various ages
and calculate a due response to each
and he could sleep, the way men
would learn to do, safe
in the fortress of their fantasy
among maps and flags and fluttering skirts
if ever he could find the simple key
hidden somewhere right in the space
between his eyes and what they see.

15 March 2003

CONFESSION

Sometimes these poems are by me
sometimes by you
but mostly by no one

language made them
so treat them with respect
the way you'd treat a rose bush or a hammer

or a letter you see right this moment
being slipped under your door
because you never know

but it might, it really might.

15 March 2003

WE LIVE BY CERTAINTY

like birds

taking the sky for granted

there is always up

beyond the predicament

morning, miners with clean collars

the insolence of light.

16 March 2003

CONSUMERS

Dreams are instances
of non-commercial pleasures.
Extending the dream realm
be apathetic purchasers.

16 March 2003

I WANT TO BE WHOLE AGAIN

You never were.

The words run on,
every word you speak
divides unity.

16 March 2003

DEER LEDGE

A rock ledge
northeast of my house
deer have been known
to walk along
silhouetted against
moonlight to the stream
but the rock is there all the time.
Our names confuse
sometimes with always,
the sound of words
on a summer evening
once and you
thought it was the world.

16 March 2003

QUIET MORNING

They must have laws
to regulate
the silences.

A woodpecker at suet,
water in the radiator creeps,
clock tick.

 These multitudes
of little noises
are what we call silence.
Hard beak soft fat —
loud shadows of bare trees.
A rule of thumb
runs the whole.

16 March 2003

CAUGHT

like trees
in a mesh of shadows you
turn at the sound
of your name called out
in the strange city.
All power in the name,
to be known, to be called
from across the street
to belong to someone
suddenly who seems
to hold the knowledge
of who you are,
the power to know you,
through traffic towards the voice
you hurry to be owned.

16 March 2003

WHEN YOU BEGIN TO THINK

the silence ends.

You can remember it

minutes later

when there's only quiet

around you, reminding you

of what it was like

inside you then

when silence was,

and you existed

blissful inside it

listening. Around

the edge of feelings

a rim of light.

Live inside inside.

16 March 2003

NINE YEAR OLD POETS

after Rimbaud of course

he'd lost the girl he bit the butt of
two years ago when he was free
now there were shadows and a self
hardened around him like peach gum
thicky sticky from the landlord's tree

but he was alone, his eyes
always wide with surprise always
narrowed with calculation, could he
still get what he wanted, the fragrance
of her he once took to his lonely bed

the private space he wanted most
now could only have behind his eyes
in the locked bathroom of his brain
where the mysteries of earth and water,
air and fire breathed around him

a cigarette to pray with, a flaming
match to drop as tiny wedding torch
into the void organics in the bowl
ceremonies of longing and revulsion
he was the source of everything at last,

words juicy in his sloppy mouth.

16 March 2003

TO BE

To be where I am
completely

how can I carry
you there

the thought of you
my permanent elsewhere

17 March 2003

POLARITIES

But if you could really be here
there would have to be another

Anode and diode always
out of sight of each other

always hot for that
what would anything be

without the yearning
that holds the really together apart

the machinery works
on such poignant separations

the priestess said and
why not make this place

your other, a well
with a blue light in it

the bottom of the world
you long for

suddenly here?

17 March 2003

STRIX

The witch
spake sooth.

The owl
ululated.

The word I meant
cracked, crick

in my neck,
the sky healed

I looked up
and there in the cinch

of Orion a glitter
new to anybody

a crack in the sky
no nova

a lasting light
lux permanens

stabbing down
like a sunray

in the forest

a sinful thought

rejoices the mind

in churchly gloom

but there is no

stone no woods

the miracle

is reckless

and spills, got me

to the other side

on the flood of it,

turned out to be
we were the same
side inside
the permanent war.

17 March 2003

WAR

Does war start today
as papers prophesy?
I say no. I still say no.

17 III 03

PRONUNCIATIONS

how do you say it?

eye wrack	ear rack	ear rock	I wrack
eye rack	ear wrack	eye rock	I rock

caught in the senses.

No wonder President Warbucks wants evidence.

(Remember the rich old man with no eyes?)

HEADACHES

also want to happen.
Be quiet while you can.
Vast sound
of what will come —
can you ever be
far enough away from here
to silence it
or at least tame it
into a word
in some other language
you could look up
some other time
when you get a chance?
Nobody talks
to a headache,
don't even let him on the bus.
You turn against yourself,
you pound your head
against itself
inside out, to get
out, there is no out,
it hurts
but only because you're you.

17 March 2003

COMBINING VECTORS

Will some other instrument

sing this music?

Lost in pronouns

emotions are bound to this earth.

As long as she excites me he bores me

I am caught in the family,

a man carrying around

a vast illegible sign in the rain.

17 March 2003

All this self and other shit
miracles, sheer miracles.

17 III 03

THE REPRESENTATIVES

1.

One after another
we unzip our chests
and splay back the bone-work
to show to famous heart on fire.
Not just Jesus, not just Milarepa
but the licit, luminous, lucid Limit in us

where difference goes to be consumed,
oxygen, you contradiction,
heart of a man.

2.

 But at midnight
our hands scrabble in the dirt
left naked by retreating snow
and as we feel dirt press under fingernails
we notice the grains of dirt give light
a little, a phosphorescence
where something — earth or bone or night or damp —
loves us enough to show a glimpse of answer.

17 March 2003