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ON THE ROAD

To find a way home
after all, to be the sun

welcomed unseen by rhizomes
through the veil of soil

no contact is ever direct
in this cosmos called Media

not just now not just modern us
but all the world we ever saw

wherever it gleams is gone
nothing immediate that

is the first fall from simple
knowing from ordinary mind

we can barely imagine it
what once upon a time we know

to know another not as another
to know without distance

to be all knowing and no thing known.

14 April 2003

MODERN WAR

1.

To mark it makes it.

The label

is the thing.

The map is the territory after all.

That is what the tyrant studies
and sends his sudden armies to erase
a line on it and draw a new one
an inch or two to the right.

2.

A king sends men and boys to die
for the sake of fields and deserts
the king had never seen.

Now it is different. Girls die too.

14 April 2003

DISTANCES

Rubbing my lip I smell my fingers
and smell me. Strange that I have to use
my hand to know what I smell like
as if when I touch myself I touch somebody else.

14 April 2003

===

I'm saying that mediation *is* root ignorance. *Ma.rig.pa*, ignorance, like the word ignorance itself, is a privative, defines by saying what it is not. Taking the negative away we get *rig.pa*, awareness, which must be the fabled Im/mediate, primal knowing, knowing before division, before that ordering we call the World.

14 April 2003

=====

All the downtowns mean me
where the orange is and race
pronounced rage and 200 years
the length of America is 3 old men

for I watched the sun stand
on the top of the hill in St George
unbearably bright and all the old
comparisons —sword, furnace, knife—

insinuated themselves in my brain
and I said No, I would be obvious and dark,
I would be a stranger, would belong
to the deep oil green water of the bay

the deepest registers of silt
from which you grow dreams and artichokes
silly as Praxilla I would be and vague
against the tax codes of the actual.

15 April 2003

WHAT THEN

You buy things for a purpose and what then.
You press on the door to open or close it
why are things so approximately obedient?
Write a statement using the word 'integer'
and sell it to the government. We pay
attention. I am the government again,
a pale boy in the cellar
on an old pickle barrel
empty and upturned
on what had been its shabby
does he compose
miracles of illegible prose
and those too I buy, I listen to myself
raving in the basement,
I have a nice voice for swooning,
the tea must be ready now,
the morning lasts sixty-seven years
and I'm still the only one awake,
I walk from room to room trying to figure out
the vastness of this house and where are they sleeping.

15 April 2003

Do you need a footnote to read me?

Here is a sock to keep your need warm.

15 IV 03

SEVENTY NINE DEGREES

And suddenly it's warm as summer
and the sun casting down portolan lines
the wasps follow through the curves of light
to find new nests. Who rides the air?

In nakedness is only strength. Mila,
Milarepa, naked to your enemies,
so naked they pass right through you, lose you
in the tumult of their rage. Be naked.

Something relents, as if the war is over,
but wars don't know how to end.
And so we call the angry sea Euxine,
friendly, to strangers. Language
tries to tame the world it made.

I sat for hours across from Saint Sulpice
knowing everything is there and nothing found.
A copper line marks the middle of the world —
and the Wise still measure distance
from that vertical. It comes down the wall
and crosses the floor like light.
Which is the backside of shadow,
pale and undifferencing, reaching for you,
the light stretches out to you like a baby
as if you really are the mother of the light.

15 April 2003

DREAM ADVERB

reducing all
things their true
dimensions
oversimplifyingly.

16 IV 03 as dreamt

PERSEPHONE APRIL

The little girl the revolution
the daffodils again here you are
you came for them here they are
peace of the first morning
among the small blue flowers
that always look like your name
idly scribbled by a waiting
woman I always hope is you

I am jealous of your other life
down there, sometimes I think
I've got it wrong and this is hell
the flames are flowers the auto-
matic unfolding of the seed the deed
of karma ripening since hell is
nothing but consequences
and here we are summer
uncontrollably begins

and this world where I can touch you
when you bend to pluck blue flowers
is the underworld of a mysterious
white radiance over now, when
true dreams stalk the distant earth
and time makes up our minds.

16 April 2003

ITE, MISSA EST

If there is a permission
there is mission,
if there's a sending
something's sent.

What, by whom,
to whom? Thingless
it happens, it all
wheels around

it is complete
it is almost gone
but you feel it
still. Nothing

we can name.
Missa est, it has been sent,
no one remembers
who came or what departed,

something was with us
and has gone, something
feminine by grammar,
and we must go now too

because she's gone.
No one remembers
what the word means,
they have been saying it

so long, old word,
the word forgets
what it means,
the mouth forgets the man.

17 April 2003
Holy Thursday

Cowbird on feeder
glossy black so early
brown head, little
devil face mildly
choosing seed.

Everything is
the time it takes.

17 April 2003

τελος

All I know is not all I am.
That's the goal of poetry
to say,

I am the stupid raspberry
hidden at the intersection
of the spiny awkward cane stalk and the day,
ripe, frail, actual,

and more than that
you know as well as I do.

18 April 2003

PASSIONATE ENGORGEMENT

Maple syrups swells the tree
let out this dulcid evidence!

What kind of a word is that?
My kind, half made up,
half found in some broken Spanish,

the kind they talk down in Texas
waiting for the moon to break.

18 April 2003

HOLY SATURDAY

There is a tone and
waiting to begin to talk
you know is not a telephone
a different interfering
medium departing
because *they lived here*
upstream lip of the island
obsessions truth tables
remembering vague
and no talk yet, yet
the human hum pervades

Call it broken
call was lost because
angular resistance
word under shadow of
satellite wind
ate *your message*
sent to their deaths
there is no
cure for survival.

Still wanted to hear
exception to rule hill

six inches deep leaf fall
strange kiss finds your nape
character your mark
upon the otherwise other

It is *without* you this
one world is one
learns to live in
or doesn't depending
when yes and no
are equal honest
some part dies

It may be the day
between dying

when memory
is betrayal

and nothing arises
having nothing to hope for

oboe drone
outside the tomb
called tomorrow.

19 April 2003

HELICOPTER HABITS

easy take off easy land
but sluggish travel
do I think like that

or drift comme zeppelin
over the tide flats
of what someone else
brilliantly conceived
but let fall to earth
as endless gay marshes

thought itself
salty almost sterile
pré salé, good
only to feed sheep?

19 April 2003

ABOUT THINKING

1.

Thinking another person's **thoughts**
is using their damp handkerchief

you must use other **ways** (*voies*)
to get inside their thinking

2.

Thoughts are pornography.
Thinking is making love.

19 April 2003

YOU RUNE

On the rare morning when I wake up wanting to be somebody else
it is you I most often want to be

Mostly the way you think and react and strategize and rage
partly the way you carry it around

And a little bit the way your shadow has
of lingering a little bit behind you after you've passed

doing something back there then catching up with you
whispering the aftertaste of everyone you too have been.

19 April 2003

HOLY SATURDAY, SITTING IN THE NORTH

Or I could learn to read books again,
braid paperclips, rub idly against the wall
like a pig on a fence post, watch my tea get cold,
think about Jesus's body quiet in the tomb
in the dawn cool of the wrong day
and wonder where his consciousness is
right now, busy with all the fallen
and the lady of blue flowers, and her somber
lord who rules the roost down there,
the one who always looks like someone's brother.

Consciousness. Isn't it strange that my language,
a big language, never found a simple word for that
the way it did for mind or soul or heart,
soul comes close but soul is too sanctimonious,
soul has no eyes, the way that Christians talk,
soul's a sort of godly sponge you need to keep
squeezing out to keep it clean. Consciousness
has no out. Consciousness just witnesses
and bears witness to what it witnesses.
No more than that. I am an idle man,
I think, and he is down there witnessing
and making real and making free by witness,
and how can I come to this awareness by
witnessing with the same mind? He's
making tomorrow and I'm sitting around.

19 April 2003

=====

Something always
and then happening

the together
the transliteration

of a barely pronounceable
name of God's what

this world is
aren't you?

20 April 2003

NOSTALGIA

Aspartame afternoons in old Albany
waiting for the light to change
I'm as miraculous as the next man
except that I know how to make green
lights turn red as I approach,
I know how to make dogs bark and bite,
I know how to make avalanches find me
after the meagerest snow. When
will my martini come? The big one, the one
in the funnel-shaped stemmed glass
with the slain olives impaled along the flank
and that wondrous oily sheen of gin
quivering beneath my finger tips
while we argue about etymologies.
At last the traffic light turns spring,
I go, hurrying towards what we used to call
a watering hole though no water waits.

20 April 2003

Easter