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## NORMS

Go quick from looking young to looking older,  
that is the way. Leave out the middle of your life,  
the time when you act your age. What does it mean,  
anything? When sixty-five percent of all Americans  
are overweight, what is weight? What is the norm  
if everybody is abnormal. The majority is always wrong,

poets always knew that, Paulus, come out and be ye  
separate. The majority is wrong, they voted for Tilden,  
voted for Gore. And where did all these fascists come from  
who were liberals under Clinton? How does a whole  
innocent god-fearing government bureaucracy  
turn into the Gestapo overnight, millions of men?  
Because it doesn't mean anything, people think  
what they are told to think. We're no different.  
We don't know anything. We protect our little pools  
of phony information and invalid inferences  
as if God handed them over on Sinai. We argue  
in bars. We demonstrate. We vote.

23 April 2003

## OLD MOVIE

I've got to do better than  
this with the day.  
And the day,  
be good to me.  
«difficile à être heureux»  
she says, slumped picturesquely  
on the ground her desperate  
lover doesn't know what to do,  
she is glamorous as a far-off  
mountain range soft on the sky,  
he can barely touch her,  
she is so holy, so distant,  
touches her, it is so  
hard to be happy, she says,  
everything is different from remember,  
it touches you, the ground  
lies beneath and touches you  
hard, every way it can, is that enough,  
of course not, dear fool,  
you need another just like you  
to tell you how wonderful you are  
and man created God and God  
created woman and no one takes  
responsibility, least of all  
for their desires. His desires.  
And the old lover says for the first  
time in my life I am afraid.

23 April 2003

## ARS LONGA

1.

The poet (I keep saying this)  
is someone with nothing to say.

And nothing  
takes a long time.

2.

To empty the usual  
  
acceptations: sounds  
to change  
the range.

3.

Just this side of forever  
the form shimmers  
in front of you hasten  
over the ice towards the actual  
  
body of emptiness.

4.

Words erode  
yield soil  
fertile plain

outwash,  
alluvial  
from your pain  
the page  
in sunlight  
spoken.

24 April 2003

## SILENT JOURNEYS THROUGH THE WALL STREET DISTRICT

And all these streets are mine  
huge narrow glass  
buildings opening like roses  
from a bud of number

I count the window till I'm dizzu  
with geometry  
and still the sky is far beyond  
the countable profusion of the actual,

of course all these offices inside  
are empty, names on the doors  
and fancy logos smart as mon

but nobody there, it's all surfaces,  
3-D same size replicas  
of skyscrapers full of busy business

but here's it's all empty, no one  
works here, no one buys, no one sells,  
only me ambling along in love

with who knows what or whom or why  
trying to sell you on my sense of things  
in all this empty beauty over my head,

the buildings are about themselves, like poetry.

24 April 2003

## THE ROCK

A natural boulder  
carved all over with words.  
Your name again and again.  
A sail. A liaison. A bed  
in summer but the sheets are cool,  
blue satin, you come home a little drunk,  
sprawl naked on the sheets,  
I slap your ass, you curse me and we fuck.  
How simple it seems.  
Try not to remember. The pink  
on blue. The tenderness, the truth.  
The battered owl we rescued from the woods  
until the roads lost us,  
there were too many Californias.  
I go out in the morning and there is no rock,  
just a little stone with no names on it.  
It must have been me,  
I am inscribed with you still.  
And that is pretty simple too,  
a sail stiff in the wind far off, a little  
boat rowing towards me  
always already the huge sea  
closer than seagulls' cries.

24 April 2003

## **CALL**

I'm just in the middle of  
something give me your  
number I'll call you right back

you always are  
what's her name  
I'll never hear from you again

25 April 2003



## TO REFORM THE STAGE

The theater went wrong early,  
there are only two people ever,  
language is wasted on other people

and the subtle interpersonal meshes  
woven by playwrights  
are pure bravura, ornate, rococo

embellishment of the real source, la souche,  
basis of all, you are wounding me  
when I love you or

all the other cases of our grammar,  
only you and only me  
and what we do together,

a play is a great two-ity  
wrapped across fierce time  
our only enemy outside

who has no lines to speak  
makes us say them  
just the two of us

powerful to bless or hurt  
infinitely. The world's  
a stage the rabbi said

between sips of sherry  
and the Queen laughed,  
the world is you and me.

25 April 2003

## **ACCURATE**

as it is, a charm  
against disorder is disorder.  
It proposes to smooth the peaks  
in the graph of what happens.  
Great sinner who wants to be happy,  
only your wanting stands in the way of what you want.

25 April 2003

**DETERMINATION** or

ways of being free

radical chicory

coffee makers

mark Tristan's

pale face up to the

music lover's tiff

any chance lasts

supper's over head

bowed and left

at the corner grocer

Spicer dead much too young.

26 April 2003

**KEEP THE PRESSURE** up

subdue the moon

how much I wanted

yours that miracle

in my sky

not the shape

especially but

even on the 26<sup>th</sup> day

through all the wet

of cloud and rain the

light she gave,

the outrage, the behave.

26 April 2003

**ADIPOSE** miracle so soft so shapely  
the lesson to be learned:  
staying soft and feeling everything yet keeping  
elegant contour always.

26 April 2003

**TIMELESS MIRACLE** skin on an old man's back  
can't tell by feel from a young girl's.

Lesson: the back is poorly innervated, the back skin  
feels little in this life, it is virgin in compare  
to face, sole of foot, arm, palm of hand, knee.

26 April 2003

## **PSALM**

Hold together  
a stick and a stone  
tap one with the other  
the sound you hear  
is what the sky says.

26 April 2003



## **DAY ONE IX**

So the tiger  
so the day of him  
a pearl intact  
inside the fire or

mordax the biter  
of days the green  
ocular fire  
*ix* pronounced

like an Austrian  
girl saying I,  
jaguar or tiger  
or what is big

and shaped of shadow  
outskirts haunting  
killer of maybe  
and it rains.

27 April 2003

## **SILVER**

Purchase this  
with silver pieces of thirty  
then hang the fruit

back in the tree  
and wait another mother

She will come

Suicide on a bright morning  
the world full of good-byes

Good-bye means God be with ye  
God means Go  
until the road is done

the road is gone  
Go means Good-bye

I bought this silver frame  
to put around a picture of you  
I have never taken

always only what you gave  
never one looking at me  
and so I break the silver

am I Judas am I Jesus

stories are so hard to understand  
when you don't know which character you are

betrayed or betrayer  
treachery is in the air

the robin reads it from the lawn  
the worm remembers last time

another planet another good-bye

it's like trying to understand the weather  
wind falls, sun smiles and you're gone.

28 April 2003

## **SHERPA**

Infuriated by a broken Muse  
he cursed the goddess

Where are labor?

Why does it hurt so much  
to think?

She wouldn't answer.

He left the base camp  
of his feelings, went insolent  
away from people,

hurt, he hated.

Are we all like that?  
Is it all just so much sunshine  
coming hard down the mountain?

28 April 2003

## HARMONICS

In the other room her breath  
she is sleeping

A reporter born before the first world war  
takes note, a nonagenarian  
nobility, slightly gaga, writes it down  
one word at a time:

*The subtlest idolatry is the worship of an invisible God,  
when you bow down before Inapparency itself,  
your idol Emptiness.*

But she is dreaming:  
Sometimes I think I am  
in one room my breath in another.

28 April 2003

## **SPARROW DRIFT**

“Slateblooms” the loveliest  
word I’ve heard for weeks

I want to kiss  
you with your word in my moth  
still part in yours

and you smile like a hacker encrypting a text

Once I knew everything  
now I am only you.

28 April 2003