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[*Dreamt:*] [10.V.03]

I am the Angel Araton
sent to take your father home.

In the meantime I'm content
to make his business flourish.

10 May 2003

(the first two lines strictly from dream, the next two my instant interpretation waking)

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

They stuck a flagpole in his forehead
and were surprised when he died,
he who had been born before flags
before nations and patriots
before colors, even, he
was as old as the stars.

His face has been with me
all my life, and the wise man
talked to me in dreams,
his face brooded over the valley
where I learned what love
begins to be about,
to touch and know, to hold
and let go, I bathed
in a lake called Echo, a pool
we drown in without dying,
to live all my life
in the sound of what he said,
sound of what it means,

his face began to be my face
in some snapshots, his face
is my mother's face on her deathbed,
they called her and her sister
Red Indian girls, nose and brow
and deep silent acceptances of pain,

her face, his face, my face, we all fall,
hold profiled against the dark
our bright stone faces long as we can.

I heard the news of his fall
as if they spoke of me
so long has he brooded in my mind
fashioning a complex sense
of silence as identity,

I heard the news and thought the only
grandfather I ever knew is gone,
changed from his form, conservation
of matter, he is a slope of rubble
now down below the cliff,
and that is what things do,
shift the crystal axes and matter slips,
nationless we fall back through our meanings.
I heard the news and knew that I was next.

10 May 2003

ENOUGH TO BLOW THE TRUMPET TWICE

I draw a picture of you doing it.
Girl, embouchure, hammered brass.

Things linger afterwards.
I saw a picture of you doing it,
the dead Pope lies in the cool loggia
on a spring afternoon after the war,
all round his body modest flies explore,
the vigil-keeping nun's afraid
to drive them off, who knows
what the soul really looks like
or where it goes, or whether it keeps
trying on form after form
to try to come to what it thinks is home,

her rosary beads are mostly shtick,
her mind is too quiet for prayer.

That image closes gently
like breath on a mirror
obscuring those former lives,
I was the pope, I was the nun, I was the ruddy hart
whose horn was cut to make her rosary,
I was the flies, every one.

And still it's springtime, still safe in time,
ground ivy blue, and little violets
scattered among few dandelions,
men without glasses

see the map of color they decode
into touchable solids,

souls, the blur of brass, the gleam
on her lower lip who plays,

who are you,

angel of skin, hair on fire,
you blow fierce inside the trumpet
that holds your breath a while
curled in its whorl and then
images blossom in th air
between us, sights and no sound,
thou miracle, thou messenger.

10 May 2003

PHLOX

Creeping incident
by which alternatives
are rescued from contingency
and brought into now.

I am now. Celebrant
of the least arcane of mysteries
I am appointed by The Crown
which as you know is the first
limitation of the limitless light.

10 May 2003

WRAPPING

experience around them let them
at least [aggravate]
the gate, and when uncertainty
[arises] at least be clear,
the tendrils,
the well wherefrom
(our ancestor said) the deer drank

whose head caboshed now hangs
dripping blood in that same
(Nancy saw it with me, Lisa
was an owl) water.

The easiest to remember is animal.
(Memory is an owl.) Antlers
and corduroy. Let the page
be warmed by the eye

reading, let the sound it makes
sound like a smaller animal
moving through the yellow
[crucifers] crossweed flowers
my amiable garden
[of tears, the valley, the barren]
the sun kept rising into the cloud
got lost there as if it were always
being Easter.

11 May 2003

[*Dreamt*] [11.V.03]

One for mother, one for child.

Bite to let the darkness out.

THE EVENING VISITOR

The woman climbing up the stairs
has come from everywhere.

She is young and pretty but climbs
wearily. Too far, too wet, too long

all her traveling, and now is too near,
too high. It is so hard to be now

she thinks, a whimperish part of mind
counts the steps, stairs are also prayers,

she prays by numbers to a countless god
and suddenly is there, the top, the solution,

the vista, the silence. She is almost alone.

12 May 2003

I CAN'T GET IT RIGHT

it's somebody else
not me. Or you either,
rhyming with palm tree
or the upper whatsit
or grande corniche
of Santa Monica, royal
palms, majestic, those
impressive motionless
animals. If you pray
to everything, eventually
someone answers.
You're never sure
who's actually speaking,
old songs choke
young minds, hands
touch your
anonymous skin.
How could I not be lonely
with you always around?

12 May 2003

MAYA

Sensory sin Maya

(the gladdess not the sacrificial gulch)

*for I have speaked the little seeds all out
and spewed them, Matter,
in a fertile fold,*

now the tile roofs of Provence
let dormice in, and wend, and all mistral
come chittering slim
between the curve and the curvetting

I read by time. So I asked them:
what do you tell?
Henry said I tell time.
What do you tell him I asked.
He said I only tell him what he already knows,
that way you can't blame me
the way time flies,

Angkor Wat she visited
spilling Monday morning now
but I saw Everest
She had her first communion in Rome
but I had tea with Mrs Browning
and we were both lost in desire—
that ineloquent suburb of London I still live in,
America. America.

13 May 2003

MAY STORM

and the wind
snowed cherry blossoms quince
blossoms red
petals of crabapple
till the paths were thick
with color, a purple snow
to see from the top floor
the scars of light
left on the modest earth

13 May 2003

MOSES WAS GOD.

What if Moses was God.

The God he met on the mountain was himself,
the voice he heard his own.

Stammered the single law in ten gasps.

The god you meet after 40 days on the mountain

is the Forty-days-on-the-mountain god.

Think of the twelve years naked in the Himalayas god

that Milarepa manifested

how much more lucid transcendently immediate that god is,
a god that stands in him

in us

Milarepa came down singing.

No laws.

The only thing wrong with Moses's law is there are ten of them
each one with hundreds more.

But Moses became god-enough to lead his people — wise, powerful, jealous — but not
all powerful.

He led them forty years in the desert, a year for every day of his own engodding.

Wilderness is where you go to be God.

He tried to make them all into God in the wilderness, but there were too many of them, too busy of them, too much fun, too much complaining, too much music, misery, hurry, gossip, sickness, sex.

So he wrought one of his miracles: he took the wise vitality of carbon and stayed it into the inorganic form: a snake of brass hoisted on a pole in the wilderness. Look at the miracle and be saved. Look on the wedding: the writhing interpenetration of inorganic with organic, of flesh with spirit. The brazen serpent was the denial of duality, a gleaming souvenir of actual mind. The people looked, were healed. Or those who looked, saw. And those who saw, were healed.

He made them his chosen people. Tell anybody that I chose you.

Naasites — the people of the serpent (*na 'ash*) story.

Lord Jesus too was 40 days and 40 nights fasting in the wilderness. Since he was already Son of God and Lord of Heaven, the god he met was his complement, the Lord of the World, the all-powerful deity we nowadays call Devil, the god who feeds on worship. Fall down and worship me, that god says, where 'me' (like the earlier I am) expresses the self as object of worship or subject of creation — the two mistakes gods tend to make. Lord Jesus did not bow down, did not display his powers. He showed his power only to the dead, the sick, the thirsty. Jesus did not bow down, so the Lord of the World slew him on the cross, parody of the Brazen Serpent lifted up.

Slain in such a manner, Lord Jesus had to come to life again, thank God. What he did to make life for him, for us, was to withhold worship from any deity who says Worship me. Instead, he taught a deity who healed you when you kept silent, looked up at him, that deity who was lifted up, who drew all beings to himself, who healed. Who would be you if you looked long enough. Look until you see. Look until you be.

You will be a deity who does all the work yourself. The god you are is a god of hard healing. You are the god the wilderness teaches you to find. Moses, Mila, Lama Norlha twenty seven years in the deserts of America.

13 May 2003

Around the edges
I hear you thinking
it is kind
to say your name

I forget it time
and again you
remind me
always calm

I claim to know
something about you
but what could I
know, being simple

as they used to say,
slow to take
advantage, greedy
mouth and frightened

fingers, still
I suppose myself
to have known you
deeper than most,

to have poked
inside you
where next year

is waiting

for both of us, all
of us it might be
by then among us
but then again.

13 May 2003

FACT BONE

That it catches where someone
waits for it dawnblind
against an animal coming
a hitch in the world trek
stops like everyone a jag
of walnut in the throat so
cough out history

spillways the least of choking
now hear you now don't
you a survivor of
what never happened.

14 May 2003

TILL NOW

so clearly the gist
of the rest of it a
face looking
out of a life

at me suddenly
changed, both
into a different
love, an animal

we were not before.

14 May 2003

WHO HOLDS THE LIGHT

Who holds the light
so tight it groans
clenches looses?

The sphincters of the light
stretched with the lance of seeing —

we do things by our willed see.

To move the world
by looking hard, Ar-
chimedes, subtlest
of just on the other
side of men,

who needs my narrow path?

14 May 2003