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even on vacation Saturday morning
wakes thinking politics, i.e., kill this
cut off that. This surgery of state.
As if utopia came from cutting things away.

It does. Call it nirvana
half an hour
 when the bars close
 and the buses stop running
and men sleep where they fall

between a lost sense of responsibility
and the first skeptic haze of dawn

because eventually work comes back
and if you're lucky it's your work
that calls you, your own,

coquelicot, your own cow to milk or
stairway to build out of lapis lazuli
leading to the easier stars.

12 January 2002

squirrels running up a tree
are talking about me

I hear my name
when the wind blows

when the floor creaks
someone is coming towards me

every sound
is an accusation

it is good to have a wall
and my back to it

no one comes at me from behind
but maybe that's how

I really wish they'd come
silently with no names

just their sudden revelation
and I fall.

12 January 2002

Turn from the yellow rose
three of them in a blue bowl
telling me more than I can handle

I miss you. Ich bin zerliebt.
Poultry feathers, heart of beef,
dust of local sofas — these
are under my control. But you,

starbelt, garterless, you, blue
around the ankles. you! I write
this down and wrap it carefully
round a stone and throw it
through my window.

Sound
of breaking glass, sound of a man
getting an idea. I miss you.
The tragedy is about to begin.

12 January 2002

When the shadow of the blue glass bowl
is also blue, the plain sun coming through it
flushes the shadow here and there with light.

Morning. Half shadow half reflection.
Who can argue with a color. Yet I do,
for your sake, mysterious envelope

I fill with noisy intimations (interruptions
of what?) any number of you will read
in silence, maybe perched half-dressed

on the windowsill reading by the glow
of the insanity behind you, city, you,
worried about windows, hysterical with doors.

12 January 2002

Suppose I could take advantage of my connections
with the royal family and smuggle you into Bhutan
so you could finish your research on kinship structures
while I wait for you in the comfortable bordertown
buying artifacts and arguing with myself over tea
whether I should learn Bengali or calculus first.
We have only so many chances, I call up my pal
at the ministry of mountains, whisper your coordinates
and he takes care of you while I sleep, you help him
with his English, everybody knows something of use.
And what am I supposed to do with my time?
I think about your silhouette coming towards me once
in the spice market in Siliguri among colorful thieves,
I recall my desire for you more keenly than I feel desire,
was this one more blown chance, and was I Popeye
with dyspepsia, pas d'épinards, a sitcom satirist,
bluebeard on strike? And why is this all about me,
what are *you* doing? When does your silhouette
come home so I can feel the complex curve
your equation scribbles into three-d space? It is you.
Structures are complete as soon as you notice them.
All that going away was just a dog lost in a fog.

12 January 2002

PILGRIMAGE

The nature of surprise is overtake.

Etymology curbs the illiterate heart
a while, dissipates the charge
of the beloved's moniker and leaves you
comfortably arguing with the dead.

With what Augustine said. And Dante.
The old Love Club nattering in the sky.
It takes a while to come back to the fact.

You're alone. The other is busy othering
far away. The wood that dreams are made of
is an endangered tree, in slim supply,

no one's dependable in the dark.
So what to do. Shut up and open up.

Get out of yourself and go, as the Bible
(first of all those coffee table books)
told Abraham to do. Get lost and find her.

Him. Staying is pure poetry. And
the only cure for poetry is to go.

Which is I suppose why I can't write on the morning of journeys, at least not till the airport or the train.

Amazing that Bashô did what he did, when he could have just described every venue —that breathless '747 poetry' of the tourist (like my Oahu). Amazing that he was able like a good Buddhist to find staying right in the heart of going.

13 January 2002

ARCHES

No arches in deltas.

The music's flat
and keeps on going.
Horizons
are busy with the heart.

So much plodding, so many
streams to ford on broad wet stones
so many levees to mooch along
being sad about the weather

The sky can't hold itself up,
the sky is drunk, keeps
flopping down on the earth,
the sun has set,
there's no
lamppost in the sky
to hold it up,

hold us,
my feet are flat
I walked too long

I saw the one I thought I loved
at the edge of every marsh
across from me, the loved face
hidden among timothy and sea grass and the birds
settling down for night
I followed, over the wooden
catwalks, gravel sidewalks,

dust roads
and all the time the sky was on my collar
and the river branches shuffled to the sea

always another mouth,
flat feet and sad music
call all the names love claimed to be
and you kept listening

like a bird listening to life inside the tree

and none of the names sound right
not even 'you' my favorite,
busy walking as you are in search of me

find me find me I can't walk so far
as where you are

with the sky lying so heavy on the earth
you're just like me
we both have far horizons
no dearth of rivers
so all the words run backwards just as well,

tide pools, estuaries, vague suscipients of so much weather

oh you you have a way of bringing
all sorrow to one point, two points,
the emerald lies of your amazing eyes, amber insinuations,
obsidian silence

until the world's pain presents itself in you
controllable and overwhelming sad.

Is this a song?
My feet are old and cracked
with all this loving I can't tell
if my bones weigh down my meat
or my flesh weights down my
bones, I love you, I mean
the horizon's just as far away
as ever. Even the sky is flat.

What I mean is always so far
I used to pray you'd come to me
while I was on the way to you
now I just want to get there
wherever it is, keep singing
and pray I don't die drunk.

13 January 2002

Leviticus love the dangerous
when the skin becomes a book
and pigeons stalk your shadows

and you have read the wrong word

what then? Life is defilement.

I read you hard I spread you open
I breathe into your dark I call your name

This happens and happens again
and will always happen
there is no distance built into our nature

the distance is a mistake
of attention
I have failed everything I mean

13 January 2002

GLANCES OF LOVE AND MALICE.

(out of John Aubrey)

1.

AMOR ex Oculo Love is from

this is the most
important
geography

love is a departure
not a destination

Le Havre
receding
through the smokes and mist

2

the eye: but
more by glances than
full gazings;

and so for malice.

Tell me dearest, what is Love ?

'Tis a Boy
they call Desire

Mr. Fletcher
called it
Cupid's Revenge.

3.

divine and inexplicable strange walks the streets sometimes
meet with an aspect of male

that pleases souls; and natural
nature, we could rely

One never saw the other
Gaze not on a maid, saith Ecclus

4.
Glances of envy and malice do shoot also subtilly the eye
does infect and make sick

the spirit of the other
after triumphs,
the chymist can draw subtile spirits
will work upon one another at some distance,
spirits coelestial (sal armoniac and spirits of work

each other half a distance, and smoke

"Non amo te Sabati, nece possum dicere quare,
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te".

But if an astrologer had their nativities
he would find a great disagreement in the schemes.

These are hyper-physical opticks and drawn from the heavens
infants very sensible of these irradiations of the eyes
for fear of fascination in Spain
they take it ill if one looks on a child and make one say God

We usually say witches have eyes.

13 January 2002

The political ideas of one's friends
always come as a shock. I myself
turned out to be a Zionist, an anarchist,
or monarchist if I get to play king.
We rot our hearts with such contriving.

And philosophers are the first to kill.
Hence the famous not-at-all misunderstanding
in *Julius Caesar*, play by a man haunted
by the grandiose follies of sheer being
a special person, to be a king
instead of playing it. The way he did
and even then the king was dead.

Let that be my politics. To be the ghost of a king
walks around a city that once might have been mine.

14 January 2002

Yesterday the light and clarity of the afternoon
were so real it could have been virtual.
Now we make realer than real without
surreal at all, not yet alas, you bird apart from moi.

14 January 2002

Accent acute on the grave
and we are carved into the world.

The name lasts a little longer than the man
except in mountains where the ice has a mind of its own

I met a man asleep there on his side five thousand years
he didn't wake and both of us went on dreaming.

14 January 2002

Why did I set myself to write
five short pieces every morning?

I wonder if because I knew
a longer one would have to be about you

I have to be quick and short
because you have the trick of thinking me.

14 January 2002

What is it we'll rehearse?
A play without a curtain,
a concerto for no instrument

just you and me striving
to be true to nakedness.

To be each other.
 Don't you know
a whole life
is a rehearsal
for our life,
 a wild becoming
on the way to be,
 heaventrack
and architext of fire, don't you?

We are heaven happening
when the doubt goes out.

14 January 2002

The light was waiting for me again when I woke
ancient tradition

 sleep
 initiated me, dream
gave me the riddle to fit all coming answers.

When I say I here I'm talking about you
when I say nothing I'm talking about me

so it's your light around me when I woke
still new and soft like a baby getting ready to cry

testing lungpower, sensing
 motherhood nearby

and then the light was screaming at me and I thought
about you and knew I was me again

man on bed ready to find you
out among the verticals,
 conquistador
 hand-carved out of hope.

15 January 2002

fling from me the text of other men's imaginings
I will be cosmologue my own
to break the dark crystals and suck the light out
you need from me only from me

and for such purposes woke from a dream
that ran from the end of daytime
into the beginnings of the dark

... 15 January 2002