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(KINO,2)

11.

stirring of the animal

beast called the Star
starting to shine inside

'glint of garnet' answer
the midnight phone call
with a color

the love that always talks of other things

12.

l'étoile and name the house
you live in
my name
is a number

and every child knows where the star gets born
movie house between the legs
loges we inherit
the smoke of ancient sacrifice

cloudless industry the 'smoaks' of Loveden she says

my name is number
and you have no name

13.

the aspect ratio of the conventional
look through the window

till you see the one you
till now tried to forget you wanted

move, and by movement alone
display what you think you need

to see the flamboyant Saturday
at the core of the flesh

o voyeurs so are seers
you prophesy reality

you make the world appear
shivered out of emptiness

by the friction of your gaze
*f*2.8 exposure infinite

because Being is nothing but machine

14.
in the labyrinth of the technical
the spirit's comfortable
alone in the molecular
velvet of sitting around a word

darts from no-space into your space

space isn't every
where you know

only spirit is
that thing that thinks it's you

15.
eyes think for you

the salmon is speaking from the pool
the ancient one
the one that remembers everything inside

and swims around in us

there was a little girl who tripped over a star
and spilt her glass of milk all over the sky

this happened only once and long ago
yet every night we see the stain roll by

we live with us as we can
feeling with the harsh
handles of our eyes

and did you think that sight was natural?
False. Light was a mistake

so when our bodies press together
they mean to recover
the original condition of the dark

the logical sanity of touch.

21 January 2002

onsward upsnow herd by heartforce
to get the little animals in line

22 January 2002

Being born. In a flat
country, much water
little wood. Again.

A small vase full of freesia
whose scent resembles

no need to be clear.
No need to say where.
Clarity led to the Holocaust

too many bad ideas
precisely articulated.
Too many reasons.
Instead be vague
naïve new born at work

trying to distinguish
sky from sea. You from me.

22 January 2002

The luster used to get there before the stone.

Then he was blind, and his thumb
had to memorize the names, that thing
you can't feel, color. He could remember.
Then the sun was hot on his face and he knew.

Light was an interruption of something else
to begin with. What? What had been going on
before the light? Now he could finish it
if he knew. Taking the measure of the dark
he called it. But that was wrong, it wasn't dark,

it was just what is, always, before the light
distracted us, and after it. The always
that lived inside the heart.

Even people
who can see could sometimes see it, a second
after the movie ends or a friend hangs up
suddenly, as if she just remembered who you are.

22 January 2002

Transports or medley:
do you want
the rapture or the mixture
as before

stars or bedroom stairs?
The crow is waiting
for my answer. Who are you
also, delicate friend?

23 January 2002

answer not a verb
the 'stabbed dove'
the 'broken arches' of the animal
Opfer, a sacrifice

to *Odin*, a god.
A kind of god.
he saw you standing
by the window

wanted you forever
his hands
won't leave you alone
this process

they call so simple
to touch
is the deepest logic
when you feel this

you really know
that is all you really
have to study
how it feels

when you touch
the person touches you
no other answer
understands.

23 January 2002

I don't know when you'll read this
but I want you
to know

I want you to know

I want you for the knowing because
to know you is to know

... 23 January 2002

I wonder if this will get through to whom
i wonder who you are when you read this
I wonder will the dragon come down from the north
and eat the forest. Or will the forest eat the monks
or the monks eat their books and the fish swim

no, they're not fish. Yes, they do know how to swim.

23 January 2002

CHASTITY

Chaste, as if a tree
with not a single leaf
all wrapped in light

or chaste as if a sidewalk
at dawn that cleanest
compromise

this virtue in me womanly
to contradict
 the roots of words

as leaves contradict the trees.
I am the opposite

 the feather falling from the sky
old veterans burning flags in Levittown.

This chastity is grief and grasp at once
a kiss in the middle where you least expect

empty beer keg rolling down the cellar stairs.

24 January 2002

I need this speech to answer thee
so I carve dogbite from the soft wood
night gave me, I say this pain
like a leaf that hides a flower

but you don't like flowers,
you are a wound sometimes
you know that, a ward
full of wounded soldiers

with Walt Whitman bending over them
to comfort and touch and feel,
we have to be everything
just to be us.

Every night a different movie
most of them forgettable
the bad dog the bold woman
the mad priest burning down the Vatican

but last night I walked in water
back to the ashram
beside a vast rectangular tank or pond
where huge lobsters swam
always towards the east, and fast.

24 January 2002

WRITING WITH A QUILL PEN

Now that the century of film is over,
moves are almost as arcane and Sumerian
as poetry

so I embrace you
fragile light

I embrace you
permanent but changeful images
I never forget I never remember

the same way twice. A film once seen
is always changing. I quote them
from my dragonheart where images are stored —

amass what happens to the light —
the whole of it one word that speaks you.

24 January 2002

I am one who reached out
and they bit my hand.

The bite is fatal
but why.

Why is a line
fatal to a body,
a road someone comes
walking on

saying the silentest word.

24 January 2002

CHATTERBOX

If you keep talking long enough you'll tell the truth.
This is infallible. It is the rule of tongue.

25 January 2002

BIRD ALCHEMY

Geese on the Sawkill Pond
by the old
mill half on water half on ice

and a furlong up the road
another flock

on a snowless cornfield
battening on stubble

la voie sèche, the Dry Path
of alchemy, all heat and no juice, all
heat and air
and bird and sun

this grasp of geese
whispering their secrets,

the Northern School.

But sèche is sepia also, inkfish,
the dark inside the dark,

now the gods of the weather
pay heed a lot to geese

whose choirs veer across the sky
melodious in doggy liturgy

they bark aloft irresistible prayer.

25 January 2002

OBLIQUE INFERENCE

a shoe made out of rubber
means Malaya
concealment golden island Su
Matra the monks
with silk worms in their staves

white ones, white monks
acting their way back home

une coulombe poignardée, born to look wounded
Indian bird, blaze
of blood on the breast,
I embrace
multitudes

means I am not the sort of person
comfortable with one meek you at a time

or even hold you, hold as a shadow holds
the shape of someone who moves
between it and the sun

someone it more or less distorts
to make it fit the contour of the ground

let me walk all over you.
I don't write letters because I have nothing to say,
all I have is a target to aim at,

so I write etz in Hebrew, the word for tree, {u
where the last letter, { tzaddi final, is the shape of a tree

its long root feeling out the ground.

When do I claim to belong to these trees,

the long land stretching away from this stiff wood

a sentence that reaches the horizon

reaching us, a sentence holding us gently, lifting us towards
the limit,

the cycle unnames me, to see myself time and again
returning,

as a frigate bird returns in Whitman, year after year
to the blue shore,

returning
to the same obsessions, the alphabet of my feelings
spelling so few words

And all the roots and taproots and tendrils
this tree has, and all the twigs and branches
speak a single word.

25 January 2002

She stands in the middle of her aura
a modest luminosity

the lecturer
talking to my sleepy eyes

blur around her frame. Shabby lovely winter day
snow almost gone, threadbare light
shaming towards the dark.

The woman
is always speaking. I exist because she says.

25 January 2002

I THROW MYSELF ON THE MERCY OF THE COURT

— Lawyer Calhoun in *Amos and Andy*

I throw myself on the mercy of the court — a phrase comes from a silly radio program of my childhood, I loved it, I didn't know it was racist, I knew its language was not the language of my street, and it woke me. I throw myself on the mercy of the court — every poem does that when it's read, or read aloud. And the reader is the court then, judge and scribe and jury, and in the reader gather all the generations of readers since woman first gouged mud or scratched birch bark to leave a word behind. All those who use language, who make books to please or guide or counsel or cajole. And the reader suddenly finds that authority in the very act of reading; learned or untaught, skilled or neophyte, the reader finds within him the sure voice of the eternal tribunal of the text. The reader says I love it or Interesting or This book sucks. Where else would the reader get the right to opinion or judgment? It's inscribed within the act itself, inscription within inscription. The poem is a brief laid anxiously before the court, and the reader is all readers, and from her judgment there is no appeal.

26 January 2002

As if the natural measurement of men were birds
one flies by right now but only in her dream —
blue-headed, grey three-piece-suit
and you don't know who you're living with until
you see his bird form in dream or vision: he
is a crow or a hawk or pigeon, penguin or parakeet.
And then you know. And what is the natural
measure of a woman? Only the keen wind
blowing down from the gold-providing hills of Lydia
the wind called Desire that most subtle breeze
that wakes us up and put us to sleep at once.

27 January 2002
NYC

But somehow we know what is right
I notice though when I'm in Germany
sometimes I'm not sure. I get angry at things —
rich stores, insolent public servants — who usually
are no more offensive than the weather.

Watch out for anybody who wants to do something about the weather,
weather is what happens, weather is what's good for us.
Read it as it passes and be glad.

27 January 2002

1.
Slumber acknowledges its constituents
a band-aid eyebrowed across his face
and Robespierre is dead. Haste heart
to understand, a disappearance
is the other side of absence.

2.
To speak of anyone at all is to acknowledge
death, by positioning discourse in time (tense,
now, now when I am speaking) and reckoning
time as that one way street (sens unique)
towards mortality even lovingly you guide who hears.

3.
A stone is that which cannot die. Hence we say
talking to you is like talking to a stone.
I save your life when I say that. Later
when I am dead you mark where my body is by a stone.

28 January 2002

Eleven suicides
the one who lived

eleven by hanging
eleven by eating or contact with
a little lethal potted plant

one you'd keep in the house in winter
miniature tropical

the one who lived, who only nibbled

airy root system, ball of peat moss, small obscure flower

why did they do it, the first eleven?

Why did anyone poison the others?

There is a plastic scarlet flower
hanging from a winter porch

somehow has to do
with this hot January 2002.

dream of 29 I 02

BATTAGLIA

strangeness of old

music meant to be battle

as if anyone could sing
the sound of dying

yet music always does

horse-clatter rumble of arquebus
wheel grind sword class
soft throb of flesh wound crack of bones

the roof falls

it means
just enough sorry left to sing.

29 January 2002

can I know anything from a book
a dog a dark room with teeth in it
waiting to explain me away

there is a dream that had me in it
and a door, it used the door
it doored me gone and the dark was full

without me and I try to reckon
who would so much want to kill
that the raised hand would have the sun in it

smiting the poor earth with day?

29 January 2002

Why am I afraid of a day
what did a day ever do to me?

A day called Wind

A man writes a poem called c

we'll call it shin but not a leg
not Rigel in Orion
a foot in the sky

we'll call it sheen, the brightness
of Orion on a winter night,
when else, dummy, you don't
see it in the day or in the summer here

sheen is beauty is schön is shehn

means s or sh in Hebrew
they used to say Sheeny, who knows why,
a bad name for a Jew, why a Jew,

did they mean sheen, is it they were beautiful?

30 January 2002

Until that day comes
Jesus takes care of the flour

saying The ice box door is open
help yourselves

and we can eat
because Jesus takes care of the flour

till that day comes
and keeps it from the weevil

but Jesus takes care of the weevil
There's your flour

help yourself
till that day comes

Jesus takes care of everything
till every man becomes himself.

dreamt as such
31 January 2002

Press to the end
I have thought enough
about touching the littoral

the shores of you

we build big skin
because we don't know what we are

inside people, insiders in love with out.

Hang the pretty wall on the steel skeleton
curve your roof pretty as a crumpled Kleenex

let the architect fashionable ruin.

Until we are what is left

I am so tired of wanting you.

31 January 2002

The trouble is that all women are fifty feet high. The trouble is a man perches on their knee and waves his sword in the air or his weapon in his hand and bellows for her attention. The trouble is that no matter how good his eyes he cant see her face really, cant see what her expression is really saying. The trouble is he cant hear her. The trouble is he jumps into her lap to prove he is the same size as she, to prove he is the same as she is, to prove he is who she is. The trouble is that a man and a woman are one person all the time and never know it. Sometimes they get married to prove they are one. The trouble is that is dangerous. The angels of such matters listen and wonder Why are they asserting the obvious. Of course they are both parts of one another's body. Only the trouble is she is fifty feet tall and he is the size of a worm. They go out together to dance in the woods. The trouble is she dances with the trees and he dances with her. He wants to know everything she thinks, and though she is always telling him he can never hear, his ears so close to the ground.

(sent to B for onward)
31 January 2002