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LENTEN SERMON

Whose mind should I mine
if not the mouth that measures me?

the word says itself —
that is all we learned in a hundred years
and most of us haven't heard
the good news yet,
the word says itself.

Fundamentalism is a disease of inattention,
people not listening.
The word cannot be memorized,
the word can only be heard.

If you can quote it, it is not the word.

Lapsus veritas, the slip of the tongue
our only truth, he said
what embarrassed them both to hear

so that is truth's burden for the day,

truth lasts a day
a flower a little longer

to let by listening
(whose mind
if not my mouth,
hell and heaven and the West Side local

what measure
if not heard?)

So teach them
measure by listening
a syllabus of sound

(I am a failure as a supplier of things)

the word says itself

to listen to people talk
is being in bed with them
worse (better) than that

they linger as your aftermind
the truth of things heard

you are the sum of what they said.

2.

Faith is the next word out of your mouth.

This sermon has for its text
the sound it says

lapsus

ex coelo

slip of St Freud

a little tongue saying this big world

Semblances arise
there is a hollow
below your throat
a soft place
where they speak

long tracking shot uninterrupted following where she wears her clothes an obvious dress
a questionable color she chose for evening why uncomfortably risqué we're always
watching the camera never falters follows like a Spanish conscience a sadistic guardian
angel witnessing never sheltering witness this witness milks her appearance milks her
form never lets her out of sight the dress must be red the street must be crowded she
passes through like an awkward flame the point is she can never escape from observation
she can never escape from the camera the camera the consequences of her actions of her
choices

freeless
a fallen world
fascinates the eye

itself chained (Atu XV)
to the consequences of its desire

camera needle stitch desire to done.

If we can never escape from the choices we make,
our only hope is making choices

hence the interactive games which lately become the practice of the world

or making no choices at all
leaving the last choice made to be the Cosmocrator ever after

Last Choice Saloon

in which her red dress
is never altogether absent
among the dancing slaves

though we will never see her again.

1 March 2002

Too talking today
what am I hiding?

You'd think a voice
would telephone

from the back of my head
the Minister of the Interior

wants your kisses too
your lipstick on his finger.

1 March 2002
Elegy for Buñuel

TRISTAN

John Wieners dead

but people like that
are supposed to go on forever,

to be with us

we have a contract
with the authorities

the lover
can't be too far
you have to be able
to reach him in an afternoon
though he might be dying
you might be dying too

but there is a color inside time
it still consoles us to see

that the diapason of difference
and the symphony of suffering
and all the old poesy connections
are spent to some purpose in our blue glass world

and have to preserve him
living, quick winged, among the living.

2 March 2002

ROSSINI

Rossini answers when I call:

Keep laughing, mon ami,
we both have accents,
me Italian you Jesuit
try to keep laughing. Funerals
are a weekday thing,
keep God, your primal girlfriend,
all yours the weekend.
Versteh? Of course
it goes faster and faster, my famous
accelerations, of course they die,
people do, they have to,
it's our fault that we're built for
birthdays, that we run out of numbers.
Nobody yet has discovered
the secret of your laughter,
nobody knows you loved them all,
all, you flirted with the planet,
you never met a human being you
didn't for a moment want to be.
It won't keep the sun from setting,
won't bring a friend back to life.
But at least it keeps you on the telephone.

2 March 2002

ADVICE TO SINNERS

Pay no attention to what you want.

Pay attention to any words you hear in your head.

Don't do them — just listen.

Listen till you can't tell

the difference between what you hear and what you are.

Cur Deus Homo the man asked but I say the question
is not Why God [became] Man but how,
hagia kenosis, the brave emptying.

But what if the Emptying is radical,
not God having to empty God of Godness
to become man, but God void of all

qualities whatsoever, a being without characteristics,
just as the Via Negativa taught,
so God had infinite Room to assume the qualities

the particularities of the human, room to be man.
Nothing had to be voided or vacated,
all He is is emptiness so

expectancy and love and patience could arise,
love and suffering and laughing
even the collocation of properties they call Jesus.

2.

And how to get from there to here if
we don't know where There is?

Answer: assume no there.

Assume only that everything you know is here
only, nowhere but here
for anything to be.

God was waiting in the room all the while
waiting for someone to say Yes evidently
be it done to me according to some word

thou art. And someone else, someone dark
and distant, to come and kneel down and say
this is the one, the weird star that, followed,

brings us again to this ordinary room.

2 March 2002

POETS, MAYBE IRISH POETS FINALLY ONLY

We are the ones
you can rely on
to have nothing
to say about 9/11
about Enron
about Taliban about
God. We are
the ones who bring
you the glorious news
that water is wet
and even the oldest
woman's skin is soft

2 March 2002

GNOMONS

1.

Nothing ages, nothing passes.

Your only enemy is the world.

Your only friend in the one
you open yourself to. Open.

I want to know what you're wearing
under the coat, seeing won't help,
only telling will tell. Open
the word that means me to know.

You are hiding, your feathers
hide a sleek that means to know me.

2.

Is it after all a question of emptying
something of itself? Or of something else
that conjugated its space? Go through
the lines of the poem with me
until we find this god we can't stop
thinking is waiting, hiding, everywhere
so why not here? What is it to find
someone who won't talk to you?
Or go looking for someone who's
talking to you all the time right now
anyhow? How little we know.

3.

Listen carefully and do what you want.

Boldly do this, without comparison,
like a proud horse over a hedge
or the silent horsewoman heaving it over.

4.

I thought you said Without comparison?

Without making any as you act,
I'm free to help you with them as I describe.
But they are no help, they are only horses.
Horses, honey, on a hillside in France.

3 March 2002

THE DIAMOND MERCHANT

Too many distances.
I can't analyze your presence
 when you're present
and when you're gone
the ball rolls disconsolate across the lawn
white on green, the coat of arms
of all gone, nobody to play with.

For we were wrong. We are young
everlastingly. The age a body shows
is the weather of the day,
not something else, not a thing,
just that the park will close soon
and we'll go home

only there is no home. No mother
at the house door
only another woman looking for her too.

Nobody needs to go
far to find their father.
I am your father
we are born together
in the same moment
on the same island.

Only after a certain moment
the rain will no longer wet my hair.
But you will hardly know the distance,
we are caught in the same thought.
Come, let me give you this precious
empty hard bright thing
I have carried from the interior
all my life to bring to you.

3 March 2002

SOLITAIRE

lucky in cards unlucky in
love lucky in rain not
lucky in look not lucky in
looking lucky in lacking
unlucky in lack lucky

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(3 March 2002)

And veiled them which is indignant in their paper that one dares to howl in streets
"DEBRE, FASCIST!, DOUSTE BLASY, FASCIST!" And mickey then, fascist him too?
they say (I quote still) this flash of wit without call, one can answer: Fascist, not. The
mouse of Disney does not carry the swastika yet. But ultra liberalist, yes. There is very of
same a difference. And it that one is made its bed in the other.

THE KISS

*...veines incréées que les paysans
Ont toujours appelé la forêt*

Because we are friends
a fire in the woods a light
the peasants call The Elephant
hurries out of the east
to meet the fire where are we then
our bed broken under rocks
garnet gravel opulent mud
because we are friends
blue birds rediscover copper beeches soon

hide hunger, hide my hunger
from you, hide my hunger
in you, nobody is supposed to know

nobody is supposed to know
all that we know

know of each other
how much I and how much you
and all the tsars in Peter's Grade
can't make the Elephant go away
he smells like a monk
he has a headache the forest
is coming the morning is coming

trees are the hairy thoughts of other people
mend my ways for me
because we love to rub against the wall

it is a desert made of trees
no hope be nimble no horizon

the peasant carry stems of wax that they call *light*
they are looking for the forest in the forest
they want to burn the night down

they're looking for you in there
you with your thread and your small silver coins
they want to save you from me from the me inside you

they want to save me with their trowels their hoses
their whistles and piggy banks
to keep us safe from each other inside each other

where I won't be your lover your father your husband
your son or your priest or your hangman finally
our mouths press close together to stifle some defining word.

4 March 2002

Never let on you're ugly.

Let them think it's their own visual mistake.

4 March 2002

You're waiting for the Rapture?

I am the Rapture.

It is not that you are taken
but I am brought back to you.

I am the one who was plucked up in rapture
now I come down from heaven.

I am the rapture to happen to you.

4 March 2002

The delicate blasphemies
of lovers in their bower

what can I tell you
about telephones
dream didn't speak already
all those voices

and doors
so many of them

we move like sunlight through old glass
aliens inside each other

made for each other.

4 March 2002