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DAWN

Real sun, not a cloud in the west
or maybe one (and in the east
a real Atlantic sunsheen on the Bay
like dawn between Cuttyhunk and Nashawena)

the colors of what happens
take us in, we are drawn
onto the space map blue by red
and here I am, a grey man
in a black time, suddenly
in love with the sun.

That yellow thing.

Because I think the primaries
will save us one more time,

lorikeets, tanagers, cardinals, finches
gold as ancient poetry, zip from tree to tree
and all the window chokes with light.

13 March 2002

San Francisco

[Mirrors]

Just to see the word mirror excites,
mirror excites,

a strange perturbation, not about me,
not about the reflection of anything
on this side of the glass
but the other,
the door of the other
open at last, and it gleams, and it glows
in there, that hard bright country
void of the necessity to touch,
hence void of the oldest hunger

as if you could reach out at last and break the light
and see what is on the other side,
the world the brightness hides.

13 March 2002

San Francisco

NORTH BEACH ILLUMINATION FORTY YEARS AFTER THE REST OF THEM

The great Buddha rises over Sausalito
filling up the whole sky over
Tamalpais, Tiburon, Angel Island and America,

I understand from the immense
presence of his clarity
and the immense clarity of his presence
that one doesn't have to be anywhere special,

I am as much here as anywhere,
as much and as little
myself here as anywhere,
I don't have to be in some special place to be me,

because he occupies the sky
in such a way the whole
sky is still empty

room

for everyone, no one
needs to be anywhere
but there. Or even there.
Nothing but brightness.

13 March 2002

corso Cristoforo Colombo

If the count is right
the light out there
must be the morning

we count so much on numbers
like an old car that always runs
but who knows how long, who knows?

14 March 2002

San Francisco

They used to take flags down at night
with some ceremony, often with music

now they're still there at morning
like the hard to sing song, I wonder,

the colors, they called it, taps and reveille,
now just a permanent remark

graffiti on the poor old sky?

14 March 2002

San Francisco

(from The Play)

The brutal fluxes of government by amateurs
while the moneyed magnates tug the strings —
chop out my lines from your bad play
and I'll be evening on the prairie, down there I bet
the Swainson's hawks are combing old stubble
for young voles.

It is spring down there and all I am is word.

You are far away because you're you —
distances built in, the deictic struggle,
a man dressed as a fat man for the play called his life.
O ink be near me, ink be true, the shabby beggar
Ahab-noble at the door of Nordstrom's
I forgot to feed him though you jogged my arm
I swore I'd pay him later the wage he earns
by turning us briefly conscious as we shop along
if only conscious of discomfort, conscious of him.
The grotesque monster a man is when we don't want him.
But he was not there when we had done our prowl,
the sky clear over Market Street and I had no
foeman to rebuke except my self . . .

14 March 2002

in flight

MEDICAL REPORT

The old
look older,
can't move as fast.
The shock
of being part
of a process
that stumbles on
without our consent makes
Kafkas of us all.
There is no conspiracy
more fiendish than nature.
Something
has to be done.
The dark eyes
flashed by so quick
on the screen
I couldn't tell
the face of an old
human from an ape's
calm face
but I could see
the eyes were a mother's
eyes, infected with
the only cure.

14 March 2002
in flight

All the matter is still here
the weather that needs me to make it whole

that is the secret of the east coast culture
a day is barely long enough to do

Bare And inside
the simpering attendants in black dresses
who knows what glories hibernate

will come forth as sons and daughters
to meet me at last
after all this waiting

waiting for what?
when does that season come in these parts
when every animal says what it means
flower by flower

a beggar waiting by the sea

and here the cold wind restores me to my order
the crazier you are the more order you inhabit

and order knows you
like a boring college friend who will not leave

it takes so much sanity to be silent

15 March 2002

Still not being sure a bird
is worth the effort the sky
lets one fall.

15 March 2002

Feed me, I arrive.

Why do they call it ambulance
when he lies down?

Why do they call the sky far
when it is everywhere
here especially
right out the window
waiting for me

It is a they and me thing, isn't it
like a pretty woman on a curving escalator
talking to me about her pearls

Each text a parenthetical remark
inside some other person's word

15 March 2002

Knowing all the right moves
the day begins

the birds,
the cars, the all-purpose light,
the whole instruction manual
spread out before the window.

Before. What does that mean.
I want it to mean in front of the window,
imply in front of me
standing at the window
looking out into the day.

But the day is in here too,
too close to touch
and the word before
tries to mean a different thing,

as if the instructions were there
before the window was,

and space just an afterthought of time.
What was before what is before me?

16 March 2002

VERITY

Gaze into her thighs.

Remember the name of a flower

but not how it smells.

Some flowers have no scent.

Some bodies lie.

All you can do is keep coming at them

as long as you are,

your life lasts as long as your desire.

To last. To be last. To be there still

at the end. To approach

every instance

as if it were the only truth.

The oath. Swear it.

Make this time the truth.

16 March 2002

**Mouth organ. Mend me
a lazar hunkering by ash.
Make it better all around,
cure, care, cleanse, be still.**

**For something rots in all this music,
there is a hatred in those love songs,
cynic shame in every hymn.
Sing less. Listen hard. Say more.**

16 March 2002

**I am willing to be the pale-haired wind
that walks you to your house
then slams the door. I am willing to wait for you
until the sun gets tired of this town**

**and you open the door to see where the light has gone.
And I'll be there, faithful, corny,
stirring round your cool smooth knees. Dream me
doing this until you finally wake up.**

16 March 2002

THE ALPHABET AS SENTENCES

Thus, if we were to put our experience on uttering ‘Alpha, Beta,’ into modern language we could say: ‘Man in his house’. And we could go through the whole alphabet in this way, giving expression to a concept, a meaning, a truth about Man simply by saying the names of the letters of the alphabet one after another. A comprehensive sentence would be uttered giving expression to the Mystery of Man. This sentence would begin by our being shown Man in his building, in his temple. The following parts of the sentence would go on to express how Man conducts himself in his temple and how he relates to the cosmos. In short, what would be expressed by speaking the names of the alphabet consecutively, would not be the abstraction we have today when we say A, B, C, without any accompanying thoughts, but it would be the expression of the Mystery of Man and of how his roots are in the universe.

When today, in various societies ‘the lost archetypal word’ is talked about, there is no recognition that it is actually contained in the sentence that comprises the names of the alphabet. Thus we can look back on a time in the evolution of humanity when Man, in repeating his alphabet, did not express what was related to external events, external needs, but what the divine spiritual mystery of his being brought to expression through his larynx and his speech organs.

It might be said that what belongs to the alphabet was applied later to external objects, and forgotten was all that can be revealed to Man through his speech about the mystery of his soul and spirit. Man's original word of truth, his word of wisdom, was lost. Speech was poured out over the matter-of-factness of life. In speaking today, Man is no longer conscious that the original primordial sentence has been forgotten; the sentence through which the divine revealed its own being to him. He is no longer aware that the single words, the single sentences uttered today, represent the mere shreds of that primordial sentence.

(Rudolf Steiner, from *The Alphabet*)

**When the vernal equinoctial rising was in Taurus a, people settled in houses b.
Nomads g came through a door d and sheltered from the wind, but kept an eye out
h for what happened outside. No more would men have only the choice of being
immured in a place entered from above (underground like kivas, or windowless and
doorless like Çatal Hüyük in Turkey) or outside altogether, always on the move.**

**A house is a sacred architecture of staying and going. It moves through the wind
and the light. It is the synthesis of shelter and vulnerability. Let the wind come in
and the eye move out.**

a = bull, the animate (following a cue of Steiner's), the breather, the breathing living sentient being, i.e., The Subject.

**That any word opens the door, a word is not only to be spoken, it must be *mapped*
onto time past and time to come, mapped onto the body as its destiny. The simplest
word? What does a word do?**

A word *tells*.

Maybe there are too many songs.

Maybe play them only on a horn.

A car door slams, a house door sneaks open and closes — is that a song?

***Lieder ohne Wörter* sang Mendelssohn, using his fingers to say them.**

Expression without denotation?

Detonation.

Who comes to see me.

What comes in car and gets out when the car door slams?

Are you a wraith come again out of all my sins,
is that the one I hear moving through the light?

Why can't I see you,

is it because I turned away and left you?

So many abandonings, all my life I was the one who had to leave.

One who had to leave.

The heart I thought was nomad but then a house was made.

Heart's camel endlessly soft-footed on the prowl,

heart's cave in the shadow it builds and calls home.

Words rehearse what they heard.

Heard where?

In the infinite

space inside

the body

speaking,

a word remembers

what it heard of the reverberations

inside the actual body

of the sounds the mouth meant to mean

inside the body, microcosm,

when the sounds were made.

Triangulation:

from a person's *impulse*

sounds arise

which reverberate

eventually as a *spoken word*

Writing comes before speaking.

The letters are the sounds while they are still inside.

17 March 2002

Something simple
not something
about something else
just itself
if it has a self

does a piano?
I bring you a carrot
shaped like what I mean

it is easy to pretend to be a dream
for in that world everything is close
but no one ever gets there

every destination is beyond achievement
hence it is said that in dream there is no History
though we ride and stumble towards it all night long

and wake nowhere
this terrible Gobi of the actual.
Everything near nothing touches.

17 March 2002

VASCULAR INCIDENT

O Paradiso the words connect
now make the experiences
do. Listen to jazz all night in your cellar.
I don't have a cellar. Just bebop.

Old time. No fusion. I do have
a window though, can I listen
to people passing and don't look in?
Write with a diamond

so they know their names. Tom.
Val. Rebekah. Take your blood
pressure it is time. I think
the stuff I'm hearing is sort of France,

conscious people wear tight clothes
snug fit between perception and description
that's what I ask of my Trinity scholars
girls with the whole world in their hands

don't spent it all on one poltroon
are you sure you don't even have a cellar
not even the wind can walk under my house
I used to be a translator then I understood

the knack of the original is speaking
without understanding, this is beauty
then the jazz really started to be good
I had the East River for my skin

nobody can take the sky away
only the mayor and the carabinieri
with their infected music (stop voting
stop voting) this is clinamen and I love you

a whistle sounded in the Sorbonne
makes dogs wag their tails in Berkeley
I have been deviant now let me be true
(only you only you) scraps of poultry

hurrying through the pastor's yard yes
people really went to church in those days
when Charlie had his muzzle in your ear
the sex tastes better when you know it's sin

I still don't have a cellar don't even
have a mirror a miracle abolishes
chance that is the fate of glass
to be kissed and seen through

slim stresses on the history horizon
fake accent on the names of instrument
be vague for Jesus' sake forbear
to scat the little music in these bones

or bend over while I play I'll drink
from your glass then it will be ours,
the time that hurtles by diseases me
what power did these men have

**to cloud the mind with hope
I have lost it forever the continent
I have wasted the precious silence saying this
hide in your cellar I don't have a skin.**

18 March 2002