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## TULIPS

Daffodils, one blue-eyed flower  
left of all the thousands.

Magnolia next door already shedding.

And I am home. The syllables  
hold me safe in their mouths.

18 April 2002

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I could live under your tongue.  
And even when you spoke me  
I'd still be there, hiding  
in the shallows of your mouth,  
the warm wet library that knows everything.

18 April 2002

## HIDING

Hide a glass of water  
in the ocean.

Hide a tower  
in the sky.

The Tour de Saint Jacques  
wrapped in scaffolding  
and under the slim ironwork  
a beige material  
hides the shape and sign.

Hide the world  
inside the material  
of which it's made,  
world means rolled  
or wrapped, hide  
the world in matter,  
something is left over  
it sticks out  
like a smile,

hide a pilgrimage  
in a city street  
tending south,  
hide a pilgrim

in two lovers sitting  
watching wind  
explore the grass,

hide hope  
in a bird's wings,

hide history  
in a red fox's quick  
nervous passage  
from shadow to shadow  
to catch your eye  
and hide from you  
at once,

hide Jerusalem  
in the palm of a hand,  
it strokes another hand  
it curves around  
a wrist an arm  
it is the messenger  
at last of the lost  
continent you hid  
in sea mist so long  
ago you forgot,

hide the east  
in the west  
then no one ever

will find it but the best  
the simplest believers  
the ones who still  
believe their hands.

18 April 2002

## THE FOURTEEN STATIONS OF THE CROSS

1. Examine the nation.
2. Be content with your desires.
3. There is no end to knowing, so seek to know. This goes you on forever.
4. Youth's drunken party whisky taste.
5. Ecstasy is the lukewarm version of what?
6. Know yourself till you find me.
7. Look deep inside you'll find me down in there, busy with your flesh and blood, remorselessly becoming you.
8. You are me; that is the solution.
9. Uneasy about the rising tide of anti-semitism, Yeshiva boys stand nervously at the corner of the rue des Rosiers, attended by perfunctory police.
10. Proud flesh: the body's out-thrust of self instead of healing, self as song, that keeps the hurt going.
11. Smile of a shopper in the mall; friendship of a sheikh.
12. The shallowest water swallows the moon. Try it. Seize.
13. Wait till we come back then we'll see where we are.
14. I sat in your church as if I were sitting in your skin, inside you, in comparable dark, reading the captions over the Stations of the Cross. What happened to Him. What I want to do to you. How many times he fell. When I will fall, and what sea will cover me over and drag me with its undertow out to meet what? The captions describe images, but they are not the images shown in glazed terra cotta on the church wall; the images are us, the stages, levels,

paces, places along our path to dwell inside each other a few days, a few years, liberties, lives, who knows. All I know is the feeling left.

18 April 2002



## HOT DAY

The way people pass  
lips a little parted  
nervous hungry eyes  
(eyes of people in museums)  
anxious for an eyefall  
to rest on  
something they want  
to buy or to be,  
not the way an old man dying  
as easy as the thing  
can be done  
might with composure  
stare up at the moon.

18 April 2002

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Who am I with?

Who do I belong?

A face becomes

a piece of the action.

*The world recoils on its permissions*

---this sentence, meant to mean nothing,  
suddenly begins to flush with sense ----

to be small enough to get in

then big enough to fill completely

the paradigm proposed,

the brass basin from Varanasi,

your pelvis willing to think

about me, even adoring, if

and only if a better mathematics

eats away uncertainty and makes

the animal know it flourishes

at the heart of wanting. *Essor.*

Machinery of desire. Night flight

steal my dark. There are measures

that lead us back to luck alone.

18 April 2002

*Is this a style we read together, force & compromise, a weather?*

Something determined. You, me and the ash tree, the old one,  
fraxinus, it lay down in my garden before we were born.

But the shadow is still there, forked like certain Persian swords,  
tongues to say two different words. Fatal words.

So much comes between us. We have to use it as a kind of glue,  
oleum absentiae, the grease of being gone from each other  
that lets us come again. A Parisian garden, a statue of Montaigne  
across the heavy traffic. You said this: there is a tree

that accounts for how we feel. And you said: the ones who pass  
are looking for something that stays still.

...

18 April 2002

## ODE TO THE SOVRAN IMAGINATION

Assembly of the first disorder right here  
is there love left in the stone enough  
for italic bridges spring over Hellzapoppin  
formless chariot of episodic lust  
drives my commune biologique  
means organic means carbon means burnt  
if you are my diamond to digest  
the uncreated fantasy of light  
fabric all around you the heathen  
think is sin. Skin. A breath  
snatched among rosebushes, still spring,  
still all thorn and not much pash,  
no color but what you bring to bleed,  
innocent with midwestern aplomb.  
All our samples have escaped  
from the magnificent museum of the night  
leaving only the two of us behind.  
Pray to the devil in your mirror,  
kiss her red tights, she'll do, she's you.  
At least the lawnmower remembers,  
the passing garbage truck all green.  
The broken glass is all the ass you need.

19 April 2002

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What would I have said if instead of reading  
a book I wrote one? What is the propulsive  
magic question that drives the man  
to say it, not see it. How can I rest  
in pleasure when the need is more,  
*a making of another other ----*  
not just the one I chance to read.

19 April 2002

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Image then the svelte phonetic alphabet  
of a newfangled pagan nation trapped  
by Soviets or Methodists and taught  
to turn their purrs and whispers into prose  
syllable by syllable until  
silence has nowhere to hide

except in sickness, shaman journeying,  
wet girls hiding in rice fields, old cars.  
What do they mean, these languages  
which stretch moonlight into editorials?  
What peculiar leaves our trees have,  
we walk around and the leaves  
last no longer than a breath,  
we can barely see them  
coming out of our mouths,  
we would understand if we could  
touch but we're afraid to touch.

20 April 2002

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I know nothing but what the pen tells me.

Black ink is the lucidest explanation.

20 April 2002

## DOUBT

Doubt is a considerable measure.

About 3½ feet long and made of platinum

very smooth. Just a little longer

than my naked arm.

I keep looking for a wise reagent

that turns all measures into blazing fire

consuming itself and everything that stands between

the heart and the house of its desire.

20 April 2002



EPITAPHION

There is no chance.

My history poisoned me.

My life killed me ----

Be careful of yours.

*Vita mea me occidit*

20 April 2002

## WHEN HE LOOKED UP FROM READING AT BREAKFAST

Chub under showcase, lox on egg,  
pepper in the milk and cool  
Sunday Mass light out there and no bell at all.  
But couldn't we have the bell and not the going,  
the church without the god, the stonecarvings  
without the stone, the stories without morals,  
the morals without laws? If my mind  
was to bathe in dust, why I'd be a sparrow  
and have flown here, but as it is I wash in air,  
dress in clouds, sentences wound and unwound  
black veil of the Ka'aba, listen to the wind  
wallow between the satin and the stone,  
listen to the letters writhing on the cloth,  
can't I have a bible without a book,  
a book without a boundary, a flag  
with nothing on it? Just the sun  
banner of the day,  
the moon hiding from her stars  
on their black gonfalon  
telling me the month is done  
when there was so much  
I meant to bring to you today.

21 April 2002

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This flower grows inside the body  
endless as neurons  
all one color upwelling  
stem into chalice into petals  
spread, blood  
on its endless pilgrimage to the light

it's what the outside flowers copy  
flaffling so easy in common daytime  
while this hard gaunt slippery tower  
strikes upward through the Egypt of the dark

this hateful flower grows inside a man  
never lets him rest in his own ground  
always sticking out or pronging out or jazzing  
out of the natural condition to some specious god  
or paradise it tries to sniff out up there  
a flower knows, a man thinks, the two of them

absurd adventurer swollen vessels grail.

21 April 2002

## THE PERFECT WITCH

*"I know more because I am willing to remember more"*

Clamor among poultry, muddle,

here comes the fox.

They created cities

to save us from foxes

but I'm on his side,

the red one runs low.

Beyond the territory

is only territory, with no story.

So little resident epopeia you

and me have to make up

whatever we believe,

only through our wet tongues

can magic talk.

Lazy sailors listen with the sea

we sleep between waves

trying without waking to discern

what water tries to tell me.

Whose daughter are you,

wave of pale grain, wave

of anonymous arrival?

But the Greeks called it masculine or worse,

said it bore no harvest, could not be plowed

----two lies that spell a sort of truth----  
and it was ruled by him who was earthquake  
whose secret wife no one was allowed to name.  
I still try to figure out how much they knew.  
And what our world would have been like  
if Egyptians had felt the same urge to analyze,  
speculate and impose their speculations.  
Rather than just knowing, smiling, and going to sleep.

22 April 2002

have come back to  
you because the conversation  
of steepletops is vague  
and you're hard

“Then comes the region of Saintonge; from there, after crossing an arm of the sea and the Garonne River, is the region of Bordeaux, which is considered to have excellent wine and abundant fish but rustic language. The people of Saintonge are considered to have rustic speech, but that of the people of the Bordelais is regarded as even more rustic.

After that are the Landes of the Bordelais, a three-days' journey, exhausting to be sure. This is a country devoid of all good things, lacking in bread, wine, meat, fish, water and springs, sparse in towns, flat, sandy but abundant, however, in honey, millet, panic-grass and pigs. If, however, by chance you cross the Landes region in summer, take care to guard your face from the enormous insects, commonly called *guespe* (wasps) or *tavones* (horseflies), which are most abundant there...”

from an eleventh or twelfth century Pilgrim's Guide for the main roads to the shrine of Saint James in Compostela.

(the road in Bordeaux was the Rue Saint-Jacmes, now the rue Saint-James.)

