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HIGH WAVE

Emotions ordered into combat by a dream
a man breaks a terra cotta wine jar
and pours out a woman he once knew
one of the girls he never said I'm sorry to
and the sun walks along the habit of the sea

wind so strong from the north a gull stands in it
one dimension flapping shadow wings

he has awakened from his sepulture, this man,
and staggered out into the broad morning, wider
than he has ever seen, only behind him the land unseen
pretends the kind of penance his dream just slew

nobody remembers
we are born
every day different
with phony passports

but the wind treats me as if I were really here.

23 April 2002,
Flagler Beach

THE SEA IS A KIND OF DESERT

1.

always coming in
no tent in this world

the desert that it is
calls only the discipline of a child
is there ever a reason to spank a saint
break the haughty spirit of the stone
cathedrals for example the light
meter doesn't have your number
look at me why
is there no word for woman
in this language?

Trade up from your cowries
to the weird green money
soft as lovesongs
read and re-read a hundred times
stowed in your wallet
kid, aren't you tired
of living on the wrong
side of the moon?

2.

Did you say

I'm just a kid who came

from wrong side of the ocean

wave,

what of it, bee-sting?

What's in it for me, finger,

you with your snug skirt on fire.

23 April 2002,

Flagler Beach

KNOWING OCEAN

Stand by land.

I have to understand*

the difference

*means having

something to say

means be a flag

waving over a specious

new republic

where the junta

has ruled for 200 years

whereas Susquehanna

is our green queen

and Delaware her king

and Hudson our Horus

their one son

the last god living.

The pelican of history

has nothing in his huge mouth.

23 April 2002

Flagler Beach

THE VIRGIN TO AN ANSWER'S PRAYER

I don't want to think about you any more.
At least for a mile. I choose instead to remember
Somebody I haven't seen in years.
I'll think of you. And a new friend
I met walking in the cemetery, stone
by stone one builds one's name, who are you?
I am astonished by my duplicity
that there are so many birds in the sky
answering a political agenda, a heart
stuffed full of names and desires and so many birds.

23 April 2002

Flagler Beach

A MAN

At this moment there hobbles
past our motel a strangely but decently
deeply sunburnt man about forty years of age
limping and dressed in too warm a jacket
for the day's warmth. Now this man I saw
hours ago a dozen miles north of here
hobbling just like that and I had a feeling
I would see him again passing our motel

and here he is or just was, he's still walking
and he will go on walking that way
until he finally runs out of north
like the man of like age two scholars met in Spain
on the road to Compostela they called
the Perpetual Pilgrim and he assured them
his pilgrimage would end only in the cemetery.

We meet people and we touch them and we pass.
And I am astonished by the lordly changefulness.
They disappear. Even this slow-walking man I knew
I'd see again I know I'll never see again.
There is a kind of charity we run in dream,
to remember all the faces we almost knew.

23 April 2002

Flagler Beach

MOODY BOULEVARD

Capsicum weddings we believe
hot pepper be my bride but by
these wetlands understand
a wooden passion, flower of time
watered by ceiling fan
highway all night and the moon
your old friend with her tongue
in her cheek the way I saw her
speaking some word only to herself
I need to hear, I need it,
I need it as the sea needs the shore.

2.

Downtown Flagler County pool of tide
brackish circumstance
we gate our gather

woodwalk slim over wetlands
and a heron rises,
a crossing in Paradise
to say the accurate angle
the pale sand path met
the wooden catwalk
under how many palms

to say just that
in the evening of my life

I become my brother
by a previous marriage

— a former bed
they say in French—

and I stand at the shop door selling
self-confident visions of the obvious.

Music Store. Food Store.

A store where no one stands
but the lights are very bright.

Look inside and understand this kind of world.

23 April 2002

Flagler Beach

FLORIDA SUITE

Deceits
of the sea. I could see anything,
any mirage, any island
over there in cloudbank,
nothing closer
than Africa
and I could see
anything but Africa.

This is Florida
the mind is charged
with familiarities
the cold surf
means to leach away and leave
the man new
in a new place.

Judgment later.
Palm trees St Johns River
yesterday today a
flight of pelicans
cormorants kittiwakes
fish hawk
hidden in the crest.
What do I know but the names.

Delius. *Florida Suite*.

Oranges of commerce,
the negative mountains
where the sun hides
inside the sea-fog,
a sound. A sound again.
Any percept that is named
passes. To name it
is to lose it
in the too-bright habit
of the mind like losing
a fish, a hawk
in the sun glare.

Freud moves to London.

I am four years old

Freud dies.

I walk up to his door
holding your name in my lips
to tell him we both come calling

never anybody home
the glass door
shows me my face
of course with the dark
furniture inside
beyond me

I ask you

show me
me, lift up
your shirt
like the teenage
flasher last night
and show me
myself, what else
could a seer
ever see, show me
the truth of me
suddenly actual
in the glint, glimpse
of a strange skin.

All the rest I say is me
is just the lie of words.

The ocean is no lie
though it is a mother
of all deceiving,
stare like an idiot
into the sun glare
in case a whale is there,
some word
you want to see
alive out there,

the Fountain of Youth
too huge to find

all round us
the biggest thing on earth
we live forever
caught in its shimmer
the sea wind
the cars keep passing
interrogate
the bare sea.

23 April 2002
Flagler Beach

THE RESISTANCE

There are feasts in the world.
Arrangements, hours.
Disposals, names.
Heretics sobbing towards the pyre.
Someone always has to burn.

To be against the place you are
and spend your whole life
paying for your life

—resistance.

All night around our sleep we heard
the dark harassments of the sea
translate into dream-french the airport
paranoia, everything
is terror when you sleep.

It's getting to be dawn along the beach —
Nominalist heresy, my heart in your hand,
Realist heresy, you in my heart.
Great saw-palmetto at my bedroom door,
horizon an arm's length away, changing,
troubador. I'll see the sun
the moment it begins to understand.

24 April 2002
Flagler Beach

SWIMMING POOL

Patterns his eyes found
in the deep corner
patterns of beauty
astonishing detail
patterns the sun made
slanting through the blue water
patterns his moving
hands would make change
would sing with,
he'd never seen the like
before, to be a living
part of the pattern

the unseen evidence.
And wanted to tell.
And then didn't want
to tell at all, wanted to keep
it not exactly to himself
but to build up a deposit
of unspoken perceptions,

a self museum, a sly
cathedral of noticing.

24 April 2002

Flagler Beach

Raggle tail swatch feather
secant take my measure
in your mood. Blue
solitude pollution solitaire
game card your ace
my trump eternally resist.

Ace of aces, you. Caravan
to Campus Stellae, star field,
bare pilgrim, story kid,
you are, you are the one.

I have been so far.

Trying in the last of years
to get there by being here

and just want to rest my
head in your lap
and have you tell me every
thing and give you all my money.

24 April 2002
Flagler Beach

CONTINUOUS ALIEN

A dance between devotions
and suddenly the plain
taste of your skin
why do I care so much it's you
what is the science of this science no one knows

the love we won't say why to ever?
Is love like hell a why-less place?

The wind has fallen from this coast
my sun tanned feet on morning gravel
and the sea is all I hear

dawn liminal
neither one
thing or the other,
I'm still living under yesterday's dappled water
a world down there where brightness
writes the blue pool

And I ask why again, why this year and ten
years ago another
why do we care about one another
are we crayons in some kid's hands
scribbling obvious sunsets everywhere?
I want to rise with you
I want to come above

every horizon
and sink only in you,

why-less, windless
the sea comes fiercely in

moved no doubt
by what moves me.

This morning
is not every
morning is it

your skin still is
special as I think?

25 April 2002,
Flagler Beach

The sea is still saying the same sentence
it said sixty years ago at Rockaway
when Nora chased me down the white sand.
It doesn't feel to me I'm any closer
to understanding. But maybe recognizing
the sentence is the same is almost
a kind of understanding, knowing
that it means, even if not what it means.
It is dawn in Florida. A little lizard
idles on what looks like lava, its color
the same as his. Clueless, faithless,
we are part of something true.

25 April 2002
Flagler Beach

MEASURE THE BLUE MUSEUM

stretching up from the intersection of A1A and 25th Street
all the way east to Africa, and up to the furry cloud
with iridescent edges shaped like my two hands the sun
is behind it now. The sun is the main exhibit.

Then me. Then the little stone-colored lizard on the stone.

Then the sea. Priorities. Put this into ancient Irish verse.

A fresh warm day on earth into which the wind begins to speak.

25 April 2002

Flagler Beach

LATIN WORDS FOR COMMON THINGS

Formica, an ant.

Volva, something wrapped up snug.

Radix, a root.

Turris, my father standing looking at the sea.

Codex, a book with flat pages, look close, I see you walking by the sea, your legs are wet, the waves lick your waist, gulls move along silently.

Amor, something waiting to be discovered.

Ignis, a fire burning inside a coal, every little bit helps, the sky is full of roots, the sea is full of ants, something blue is inside everything, oxygen, my hand.

Mare, the ocean, or a thick book, or my father's only wife.

25 April 2002

Flagler Beach