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To get a word
commit a book.
Open to a blank page
to find the right word
waiting for you

your hand to write
the sacred unknown life
of the unspoken word.

There's no girl
to help you now,
help the word out,

the word has to find
its own way out.

9 May 2002
in flight

TWO SCALENE TRIANGLES

1.

This is sad but is not a flower.

People go on waiting for me.

2.

Touch by touch

To put myself in you.

9 May 2002

in flight

THE ENGLISH BURNT HER AT ROUEN

the scale of the thing is what counts

the ladder

up to the stake

great knee lifted from the sea

flectamus genua

we bend our knees before the mystery

cruelty

she climbs

a cloud comes out of her body

a plane comes out of the sky

I just want to understand

the waking world

I was born a little bit before

do it

the scab of wanting

hides the fact

live tissue can't

see the touch

young old virgin fire

consuming the signified.

9 May 2002/in flight over Normandy

The return
holds me
in its arms

to see my city
being particular

Brooklyn the green
river under rain

the prospect
held.

9 May 2002

9:55 AM

New York

I am sailing into sleep
the way the bad
boy I wanted to be
drifts down the slutty river.

9 May 2002
KTC

Then one is home.
And it seems simple
this contract
to be in a place

to work every day
into something made
something found
truer than be gone.

10 May 2002

Lindenwood

A clever girl
following instructions
will never abolish
the only chance we have

to tell all we can
into the blue machinery
and hope somebody hears.
If not why are we speaking?

10 May 2002

LISTENING TO ROBYN CARLISS

Ritual of crows

I love that

I will listen to her limbs

Hidden behind the podium

Reciting

I will pour a pouting soprano

Out of *an un milked box*

Is that what I mean

Or only what I hear

I mean can a man mean anything but what he hears?

Who's talking about men here,

among these exhausted Capricorns

serene as carpenters

teaching the wood to fold its hands

but no praying, you hear me down in there,

no time to waste on prayer,

you have a whole sewer to drink

Cloaca's business, to express

everything a city thinks

and pours down your veins (I'm being specific)

carried mindful forth

into the Buzzards Bay of proximate occasion,

what people mean by sleep.

It has to begin somewhere
like a fish or a quartet
some silvery slips out of the dark
and there you are,
 a sharp or why
label silence with the sound of
something, weren't we truer
when we were wet? ordinary?
arrival? gently, all night,

hold you as if hold hands.

11 May 2002

=====

Can't we make a sign
that will change everything?
Or are we afraid it will change everything.

And then we'd know what everything really
meant and really was
but by then it would be changed and new and gone.

11 May 2002

(if Tang can, why can't we?)

HIMACHAL

Anyhow where are they waiting

flow or not flow *παντα ρει*

first Greek I saw, neuter plural takes verb in singular
that's interesting, that's how things go.

Where are they waiting, *âlaya*, stored,
the seeds of actions and consequences
stored? The warehouse is the world,

roundhouse of consequences, keep chugging,
everything you see will happen to me.

Shocking the mountains look, so new
their fresh-cut granite, their new snow
over the sweltering ancient lowlands
every inch of which has been fingered
and bought and sold and pissed on and loved.

12 May 2002

=====

Will this
Be enough
To be now
Ever?

12 May 2002

LECTURE HALL

Lust without tenderness
a guilty feeling
after the reading
wanting to strip the words away
and leave the poem
nakeder than you can say.

12 May 2002

=====

Then the street starts and the pigeons
open heaven for us and we see
how far that near is,

ever and ever,

the tower clock is God's eye sternly
measuring the sensuous flow.

So much

you are allowed, no more.

He looks like Einstein, maybe he's
the one who keeps pigeons on the roof

and the roof is everywhere.

The bright

mistake hurls itself up out of the east,
that woman in the west has greedy hips
and nothing has changed since Egypt,

nothing but the way we write things down.

I warn you against the steeple and the cellar,
against the too-fragrant blankets
on your mother's bed, against lilacs,

I warn you against rain, against the moon.

13 May 2002

=====

Knowing it's near
the body takes its measure
from the soul

I want you
is not an animal remark

it is response, organ tone,
the stone itself
stores music
and lets it loose in the skin

the special organ of the ear, the hand.
At midnight we walked past St.Sulpice
an organist inside the locked
church rehearsing, we heard
the burden of him
through the shining windows

membrane, eardrum, hearing
what the stone heard

and walking was that kind of answer,
thigh pressure, the moon over
a not quite empty street as if
a touch is skin happening to skin.

14 May 2002

=====

Chance of reaction: bluebells
planted by a red house
just coming up.

We are weather.

We happen to each other,

we come in colors, we are old jokes
you suddenly get the point of

and no laughter. Spirits of wine
burn blue in copper chafing dishes
in old novels, scarlet faces
of the dinner guests invented

and I will never eat againb.

I'm dying now, do you understand?

When you hear me again

I will be different,

a new animal

with clever paws,

bright horn lifted against the black sky.

15 May 2002

=====

Sunlight cloudlight
faces on a staircase
we walk among ghosts

the mandarin grace of Gerhard Richter
smooth summons
the ancestors

of this mind's race
I have loved you again
you who have ruled my life

(ruined my life)
with your beauty
your wise body

spoken in so many books
I pressed against you
in Vienna a wind from the east

pressed us together
as I were the latest shadow
stretched out on your ground.

15 May 2002

THEOLOGICAL PORTRAIT: KW-D

Everything reacts. A parliament,
a girl smiling and giving vague responses
in semi-insolent Whateverese.

Darling, who are you? It's not that I
have never known you or that I fear
no one will ever know you, you will be

but be unknown, backside of the moon,
or you will be the one that no one knows,
the one who grieves. You will be god

absent even from yourself, potent
with all the wrong kinds of chemistry.
Men fall in love with such flawed silences.

So you may share that fate too of the divine:
crazed worshippers adoring your unanswers.

16 May 2002

A SYMMETRY OF GIRL

Find something

That rimes

With everything else

And let it drop

Something reciprocates

This shape

Who knows

Who anyone is

And yet they are.

16 May 2002

THE PERSISTENCE

Elves maybe. Gods certainly.
The land is packed with persons

But we have trained ourselves
To offer them the Cut Oblique

We are the arrogant ontologists
Who claim we are alone.

But I don't think they care very much,
Those others, fauns or faerie,

And rather than declining as the late
Romantics tearily supposed

They prosper, their population in us
Steadily growing, they move the air we breathe.

Less and less they expect of us
Tiresome newcomers, children of cement.

16 May 2002