

8-2002

**augl2002**

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### Recommended Citation

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## **PERSONAL**

Tired of old neckties  
the closet puts an ad in the paper:  
Single Dark Bisexual Closet  
seeking surprises. If you're weird,  
small, clean and don't smell too bad  
come on over and turn my knob.  
I've got a place for you in my heart—  
You know who you are.  
No pets. No polyesters.

28 August 2002

## A BRIEF BOTANIC GARDEN

Knowing is other.

The full train

lurches through clover

spills seeds from elsewhere,

native nowhere

they germinate

along our track.

*We leave the road behind us.*

Track, on the track.

Numbers go by

and we trust them,

weird wheats.

Counting things

we work back to origins.

Grovelling. It is the middle,

we come from middle.

Find the center

of the landmass a million

years ago and it is there.

There as a dead wolf

lying by a dead man.

I think you are Armenia but who knows?

28 August 2002

## THE ANSWER

Such that the second sentence  
replaces the first. Forever lost  
it lingers (mama, mama)  
in the cry of the mind.

Wordlessly accurate you  
fucking just know.  
But does this knowing  
do you any good?

Yeast infection  
barnacles on your bottom  
a typhoon walking up the sea.  
Hopeless, the information

you need was lost with  
Atlantis. Find one  
find the other. Hopeless  
but not impossible.

As it is  
a razor with no beard  
a limestone wall  
with no moonshine.

28 August 2002

## **TRISTIA**

Time is your only enemy  
and time your only weapon against it.

28 August 2002

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR**

Tell me simple: what should they know?  
These children, almost people, how  
to help them learn what you think they should.  
What do you think? How can we teach?  
Why should school be different from the world?  
Does telling them do any good? What  
if the classroom were just any room  
and had no teacher, just a lucid absence  
where the daylight lands through big windows.  
Sunlight, a room full of tools, instruments,  
measures, books, bibles, pencils,  
keyboards, horns, flowers, wheels  
and live jaguars pacing in the halls?

28 August 2002

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the rain is mostly leaves  
the lisp I hear  
on this holiday of water  
finally I love it  
rain I love you you are my lady  
my signal my kingdom  
I am always ready for you

soft as you are this morning  
kissing the maple leaves outside  
to make me jealous  
it's just like you I love you for it

for your music only skin can understand

29 August 2002

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The rain remembers.

It is not necessary  
to turn your body inside out.

The decoy on the windowsill  
brings down a flock of angels  
the kind who read the papers.

Or become newspapers  
flopping white along the streets  
tomorrow night.

But the news is always old  
by the time they get it  
and newspapers themselves  
are weary things, nostalgic  
souvenirs of some belle époque  
when the word stood still.

The news is always old.

But angels are eternal,  
which is a kind of excuse,  
a slight irrelevancy  
allowed in their timeless beauty,  
a hint of classicism  
about their urgent whispers.

29 August 2002

## PESSOA

I if anybody am Pessoa.  
But I have silenced  
the names of all my persons,

secret heteronyms.

Who wrote what.

I left their poems to  
sort themselves out.

Trusting you, always you.

See, I always knew  
I could be all of them, all  
my voices, let all of them  
say all their different poetries,  
because I trusted you.

Always you. I knew  
somewhere and some day  
you would figure all of me out,  
hear the words tossed out  
from all my mouths,  
sort them, hear them, and know.

I knew you would know.  
Always you, always know.  
You know who I am

of all the people in the world

you understand. In your own

sweet time you speak

all the names of me.

And all I am is thanks to you.

29 August 2002

**Reading Neoplatonists at midnight**

is just getting ready for trouble.

The fine, the mind,

the *away from here...*

They find the middle of the moment.

An exaltation of the secret

for whose sake men fight in front of bars

that have just closed, there is an Idea

hidden in action they think

it takes action to disclose.

Revelation must always be a kind of pain.

29 August 2002

## THEOLOGY

Slag glass, blue green, a chunk  
broken from the bottom of the crucible.

I am so depressed, I want to call you  
on a sea shell, I want to reach out  
with no plan, fingers with no pen.  
Let the pores of my skin be code  
you know how to read with yours.

But things swing us out of reach.  
There's only my shadow, that furtive  
church that runs beside us,  
where we can sometimes meet,  
overlap, praying to the same god.

29 August 2002

## CRIVELLI

Nothing empty. Art  
inscribes  
and no space is spared.

The sky is full of birds,  
angels, a golden  
vortex from which a shining  
beam comes down.

The vortex is the Father.  
The lightbeam is the Sun  
entering his mother.  
Carlo Crivelli is the Holy Ghost  
remembering this onto the panel  
color by color till we finally exist.

29 August 2002

(thinking of the painting he has labeled *Libertas Ecclesiastica*)

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It is what you do with it later  
that matters. Where it goes  
and how you tremble when you put it away  
in the old china closet your mother told you  
was there to be looked at and seldom seen  
and seldomer brought out to use, life  
is like that, we sit in a tool room  
and we are tools, so rarely do we deploy  
all the feeble multitudes we are.  
Our skills. Did your mother say all that?  
No, I put it together later, out of winter,  
out of what girls said to me in bed or after,  
out of a dying priest and a burning house  
and a fox who crossed the road and paused  
to look at me as if I were there. And suddenly  
I really was. That moment opened a door,  
one that's always there. A real door  
has nothing to do with time. Someday  
when I finish putting all the things away  
I will go in and be where I'm supposed to be,  
another house, another mother,  
and I will be master of another question.

30 August 2002

**Just stay with the little**

thing there is  
the feel of wetness  
could be dew

sun just over the trees  
purr of a car  
on the lonely highway  
Sabbath morning

going far  
but being here now  
so many miracles  
water pistol running shoe

Once I thought  
there was a mountain  
I, a kid who needed  
a ruler to draw a straight line

a pen to write a word down  
a coat to go out walking /outside  
yet I think there really  
was a mountain and it stays

there rough beyond the small  
certainties of scissors,  
sometimes the simplest  
words reverberate

strangely you hear them  
and that echo is  
the mountain's answer  
unimaginably close.

31 August 2002

## THE CRAFT

Do not despair  
hope comes too soon  
the princess  
buried in the alphabet

move with only  
moderate pain through  
thorns through flame  
and wake her with your kiss

pronouncing this.  
She whom you summon  
from the sleep of words  
into briefest form

will set you free  
and your name also  
will be murmured  
among streets and beehives.

31 August 2002

## AUTHORITY

Desire is the authority/

The bell that tells the town

it doesn't want to understand

do this do this for me

do this thing to me let me

do this to you

these things

these powers of the lower sky

lord it over

one another

we said what we wanted and they did

and we were masters of each other

the situation is a small river

drives a creaking mill wheel where?

in the oldest town.

Desire is so powerful because it is never original.

everything you want has been wanted so long

before you got here to want it

always

desire is already there  
built into the world

to specify ourselves  
in the action. The authority.

To desire and say what you desire.  
No one can sleep till they give you what you want.

31 August 2002