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# THE LANGUAGE OF EDEN

Self hysteria  
self is hysteria  
his story  
that is what you find out  
in the darkened room  
of so many recitations  
crepuscule of the word  
Achilles listening to the ocean  
o make this water mine  
and no woman ever  
walked the hallways of his dreams  
my hand on the telephone  
waiting for the word  
so many heroines  
stretched out to judgment  
caress the curve

Nihil is the resistant  
not the nothing but the not defined  
it is all pervasive  
it is what we try to shape or shatter  
with assertion  
making meaning where before

was only the pure

the pure voice

you hear it walking in the woods

saying everything and specifying nothing

nihil

I love to hear herself talk

if I cannot be the father

I'll be his daughter

resist him all my days on earth

o mais les nuits the wells

from which we gulp such water

pure without judgment

to lick

I only drink at night

to ease my throat

from so much day's coursing

the talking cure for the feeling sickness

we visited the country before the war

all our riverbeds were dry

and water had a strange voice

among the shiny pebbles

we lived on the Damascus road

sometimes rain would wash the stones away  
and make the clay a sticky road no car could pass  
that summer he was dying in London

my mother said she could hear the water's Russian  
and I knew only I had no language  
I wouldn't speak to anyone  
they'd try to make me

but all I wanted  
was to see the porcupine  
climb up the pine tree the rattlesnake  
lie sleepy in the morning sun  
the deer gaze at me from the woodlot's edge  
when you see an animal it means you're thinking

all summer I was thinking  
and not a word I had to say  
I watched the thermometer go up and down

rigid interpretation  
sailing ships and steamers plunging  
smokestacks like the valves of trumpets  
holy trinity going far away  
does music ever come back  
but when an animal looks at you it means you're wrong

men with breast fetishes want to be children  
men with buttock fetishes want to be women  
men with genital fetishes want to be men

sometimes the bird can't tolerate  
eerie smell of the closets  
where the winter coats have talked too long

sometimes a coat never comes home  
no names please  
whose coat hung a whole life long in whose closet?  
never came home

just say a lady  
or another  
my brother touched me there  
(pointing) and I resolved  
to explore the ruined chapel

the old dry fountain  
looked as if the sunlight broke it  
not even lizards lived there  
the roused sensation  
and then the water came again  
I bent to drink

but our resolutions

do not last the first week of the year  
week means a turning  
month means moon  
what do years mean  
yare means nimble  
yore means being long gone ago  
your means my desire  
why don't I know what the little word says

it says what you almost remember  
what the girl did in your dream  
do you remember telling me  
I wrote it down a long time ago  
but I do not dream  
it dreamed me

*es träumte mir*

or on my way another spoke  
there is no end to this going in

you mean there is no in  
beyond this door  
no room in the in  
every child heard that in church  
but still we pry the door open  
pray it opens  
wedge our littlest body firm inside  
but you've made mistakes too

haven't you, fallen asleep  
while some poor heart  
descanted on its grief  
you too have awakened with anxiety  
wondering what the patient said  
wondering what you missed

and gone to bed with terror  
am I alone in this bed

have I lived beyond my body  
have I outlived my soul  
when you say that what word comes to mind  
a Kleenex used once and let fall

Freud is the name of believing  
you have a right to be  
that things have a right to mean  
that your life has a shape  
and you can know it

you can go there  
where the living is

how can I know  
how can I even make my hand  
do not do

what I want it to  
my brother made a big issue how I couldn't whistle  
I never really learned how I can't even now  
but I do everything else

but do you ever drink the golden shadow  
the later it is the more I want  
and how did that make you feel about music

what music,  
music is a pretty street that goes nowhere

twenty years of paychecks have done wonders for my disposition  
but you don't outlive neurosis, understand  
it changes its targets and its tunes  
and in the novelty of that variety  
you suppose yourself improved

but there are doctors hiding in the least of things  
medicinal Balm in any random lap  
because you don't have to believe you just have to remember

memory is the fertile lie that makes the future grow  
stop touching me  
especially there  
I don't want to know what it feels like  
I don't want to know how I feel

the bread on the table is soft and white  
food is such an absent-minded friend  
never finishes its consolation  
a certain man left weltering at the side of the road  
I need to look that word up  
weltering, Pilgrim's Progress, stern god,  
it has welt in it  
which means a wound or bruise in English  
but means a world in German

do you come often to this bus stop by the lake  
you can see the Bavarian shore across the way  
may I touch you now  
where the fur falls back from the nape of your neck  
o don't touch me there I feel too much  
we come for the summer only  
I have no affection for skiing  
there is so much contingency already in my life  
in all our lives  
sliding on my bottom down the slope  
yet isn't risk an element of pleasure  
maybe it's the only pleasure  
plaisir d'amour and all that slop

isn't it important to distinguish risk from pain  
I didn't want to hurt her I wanted to hear her say Hurt me

there is a difference  
there are rowboats approaching from the west

why do you interrupt yourself to tell me that  
I don't know where we are  
sun glare west bank of the Nile necropolis  
this is the subway of the dead  
I can't hardly hear a word you say  
there is such roaring in the tunnel  
people say it is the trains that make the rumble  
I say it is the thousands of the dead  
hurrying on their way  
to where they go, they want me with them,  
I hear their stormy voices, sometimes I hear my name  
pronounced in their strange accent  
o doctor the terrible dialect of the dead

I think you speak it  
I think you're speaking it now  
you want to kill me doctor  
to stuff me into your necropolis  
like all the bric a brac on Freud's sideboard

museum of other people's lives

I'm sorry I don't mean to be such a bitch  
I don't know why I say the things I do

why I see  
the things I see  
and saying  
I say as much as the rose will bear

Do you think everyone is supposed to listen to your story  
where do you think they'll get the patience to hear you  
that's what my husband used to say  
do you think I should care about everything you tell me  
isn't it my business to forget what you so painfully remember

each of us has his job to do  
yes I know you are a woman  
entitled to a pronoun of your own

even though I'm listening I'm not sure you're talking  
and you don't, you smoke and eat lozenges and mints  
while I'm trying to talk  
I'm trying to tell you the heart of me  
and you eat peppermint

are you really trying, though, why does it matter to you,  
do you think, that I smoke

smoking is doing something different from me  
smoking is saving some part of your mind for you  
I want all of your mind when I'm with you

I'm paying for it  
stop fingering that Egyptian figurine too  
it makes me uneasy

it's called shawabti, it's made of blue faience  
what else makes you uneasy

touching, so much touching  
I never said that even if you say I did  
let's not get into a dance of denial

I love denial  
it lets me live  
it lets me love

they put them in the tomb  
with the dead man  
so the figurine could do the work  
the dead man could not do  
but needed to have done  
on his way to the wherever  
he was going, little blue men  
to work for him

blue men at the bottom of the dream  
there was a light at the bottom of the well  
where a woman opportuned me

she was naked and she was old  
then she was young and fire  
was coming out of her hand  
I went down until I woke  
am I with her now and you  
only seem to be you, you  
with your mustache and cigars  
you are too I think

isn't everyone a woman really  
isn't everybody my mother

I can't believe you're not listening to me  
you're fingering that stupid Chinese figurine  
and I'm trying to tell you  
it's so hard

are you hard now listening to me  
not listening  
are you staring at my thighs  
what do your fingers think  
while they fiddle with that thing  
are they thinking of me  
do you want to touch me  
the way they did  
they used to listen carefully to me  
it's true they never gave me good advice

they wanted me right where I was  
where I am  
where they can get me  
keep me in reach  
keep me in my misery  
so that I reach out to them  
to make them touch me

touch me

are you some sort of broker of enlightenment  
why don't you tell me what you really think of me

which one of us is speaking

don't answer it don't answer it  
I don't think it's right to let the phone ring  
the phone sound is someone else taking you away from me  
am I just a cloth you put in bleach  
to take my meaning out  
so I could just be anybody  
and you say Sorrow be gone

sorrow be out

the way we used to talk before the war

before the fall

Javel water, pale bleach in gallon flasks  
saltpeter hospital  
breathless surgeries of one time ago  
I have lost my own history  
trying to please you

anamnesis  
trying to remember  
trying to remember too much  
the crowded tram that ran down to the beach  
in my country  
we wade far out then turn around  
and the land we had come from seemed a shallow place  
misty and low, it was hard to remember  
there was a city there  
and we lived there not far  
hidden in the visual distance  
all we see is all we mind  
while the sand ran out between our toes

who would be there with you, your brother  
sometimes I came alone  
the sea gulls made me happy  
one day a gull was hurt or wounded at my feet  
and I felt it was my fault  
though I had done nothing  
just looked down and seen it there

twitching softly  
maybe responsibility begins with what we see

I tried to pick it up or something  
and it pecked my hand  
it hurt and I remembered  
my mother how she would heat a needle  
and stick it under my skin  
to work a splinter out I had  
the bird made me bleed  
but I wouldn't let it go  
I brought it up and nestled it in a clump of sea grass

did you feel it was like your child  
why are you talking about children  
don't you know that upsets me  
are you just trying to make me an ordinary person  
well-adjusted mother of

tell me about what your children would be like if you had children  
I never will I never will  
but if you did  
you never let me finish about the gull  
and now our time is up  
usually I mind it when you say that  
but I'm glad not to talk about children  
you're really fixated on my having them why

not on your having them just what you think about them

but the divan's empty now

I always want to know who cleans his office  
his invisible wife his illegal immigrant au pair

I imagine her sitting in his chair in the dark  
the stretching out along the patient's couch  
where she has no right  
no right but the dark  
maybe she masturbates there at midnight  
fantasizing all the weird narratives soaked into the leather  
leather is so cold  
maybe she turns the lights on  
and stares at the special ceiling  
she wonders does he choose  
each crack and stipple on the ceiling paint  
his patients have to look at

maybe she should write a word up there  
softly with her fingertip in dust  
a word they won't be really sure they see  
a word that will distract them all through the analytic hour  
but will teach them something, what,  
console them, yes,  
but she can never think what the word should be

arcs of sameness  
an idea not an experience  
but can't I feel you thinking me  
what do you do alone in the night  
when your wife sleeps at your side  
peaceful as a South Pacific isle  
unDrake'd by discovery?

why think of Drake now  
strange word that means a dragon or a duck  
as if everybody is just like me  
afraid of every living thing  
the terrifying sparrows in the dust

but do you really feel me ever  
when you are thinking  
am I just an hour in your week  
like church or not like that  
are you devious enough to be holy  
do other people steal from you  
of course the famous ashtray  
when you're tired do you sometimes  
forget which one of us is speaking

when I wake up  
there's always an invader at the door  
I had a dream a long time ago

old dreams are they still valid  
came again and again it scared me  
I called it The Occupation of the House  
there'd be a knock on the door I'd open  
and someone would be there and come right in  
and never leave and never leave  
what can I do  
to make them go

you'll have to tell me who it is  
who comes in when you open  
what kind of person comes through your door

if you look very hard to really can  
read a word on the ceiling  
what does it say?  
I'm still trying but I think you have  
words written, hidden written, all over the place  
to test me or control me

every wall and furniture  
begins to talk  
and there is nothing left for me to do  
but sit there sullen reading them  
and never alone

isn't it stupid I come here so many times a month

and sit here with you

to be alone

I have to pay a man to sit with me

to be alone

and then the hour's up, you throw me out

so I can't even be alone that way

I have to be out there with the crazies

the other crazy people

I only want to be alone with you

it fucking sounds like some dumb fucking song

doctor

learnèd one father of wisdom

butcher of my soul

you filet me so neatly

in Scotland they call a butcher a flesher

did you know that

you take my flesh away and turn it into talk

you make me talk

instead of being healthy in my body

god damn it I am meat

there's always a camera working in my head

that shows me me

sometimes when I'm with you it stops

marry me doctor marry me we don't have to fuck

just stay with me

sty with me stable with me  
let me be your animal  
let me stay here forever  
reading the word  
I see your eyebrows write  
shadow by shadow  
on the wall of your face  
why don't you ever tell me what you feel?

I go no further on this path  
can go no  
this path Maghada  
do you understand  
where the Buddha was  
that's what I think  
any little pathway through the woods  
is where he went once  
and now again  
whenever I get really confused I think of him  
there is a way  
to go through all this natural  
these trees this loving  
this loving this wanting  
  
to get to the other side of love  
  
are you my little path?

is that what you think he did?

I think he did something I think he got somewhere

I need to follow

it cheers me up to think about it

the going in

through sunlight dappling the jungle trees

what does jungle mean to you

I mean I'm caught in my life

what can I do

but follow the footsteps that brought me here

keep going or stand still

maybe when I come to see you I stand still

I stand on the path and look ahead

you can't see much ahead in the jungle

the path is always turning

I see the light coming down

and the darkness waiting to interrupt it

sleep with it

the darkness wants to fuck me

I can't keep going

but sometimes I think of him going before me

every time

what somebody really does once

eventually everybody can do

alone or together

it's waiting so long

I can't go on any more this road

and yet because someone else went all the way

did he?

what does it mean to go all the way?

where did he get to?

all the way to no end

do you hear what I'm saying are you listening to me

when I listen to myself

I hear myself saying things I won't understand for years

I mean I say the truth of what is coming

I mean I say more than I know

and you, you say less than you know

that's the difference

as if I pay you for your silence  
doctor your fees are hush money

why are you saying that to me right now?

because I can't go on

I can't

every road is wrong

this stupid analysis these stupid questions your dumb Ikea furniture

give me a break

everything I do is wrong

and I don't want to go on being wrong

I don't want to go on

do you hear me when I

are you threatening?

I'm threatening myself god damn it

can't you tell the difference

you're the one who's supposed to be clear about boundaries

which is you and which is me

I wanted to ask you a question

what does it mean in old books and movies

when they tie a broom to the mast of a ship

on the crow's nest above the sails

in my country they don't have that custom  
or I don't know it, it must meaning something  
what do you think it means?

broom could be a woman  
they always used to call ships she but  
why a broom maybe it's the old word besom  
looks like bosom  
does it mean a wife's aboard

what would you mean if you put up a broom?  
maybe I surrender  
maybe my house is dirty  
come clean me out  
spit and polish and elbow grease  
but flies come through the window

what do you feel then?  
I feel invaded, weird people  
fly around my room  
they bring diseases polio and leprosy

are you afraid of them?  
they make me uneasy  
I have to chase them out or  
kill them I hate them I hate to kill them  
anything

come clean me out

I have always tried to help you

why do you think you thought of the broom today

the broom on the ship

I need your help

is it because there is a woman on board you

a woman you want me to help you clean out

do you think this woman is a part of you?

some people carve letters in their skin

initials of the one who doesn't love them right

initials of the departed lover

I don't have any letters on my arm

it just seems crazy to do that

but I feel as if I have them

I mean there are names written so deep in me

I'm shocked when I pass a mirror

to see their names are not written on my skin

shocked to see that I'm still me

and not them, the ones I think about

all the time, I can read them where they live inside,

maybe some day I'll turn into them

what do the names have to do with how you feel

do you sit at night mouthing their names

instead of calling them on the telephone or knocking on their doors