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my women don't have doors
the women whose names I cherish
they have no doors and have no phones
I don't know where they live
sometimes they map themselves on living girls
that's strange that I say living
as if mine weren't
and they are, they really are,
but they live in me
does anybody live in you?

that's hard that question
nobody ever asked it
I'll have to think about it
but help me by telling
what it means when they live in you

I don't know, the names are clear
and what they want of me
and what they want me to do
I can't tell what they want from what I want
so I do nothing
I just remember
which is what you always want me to do anyhow isn't it

what is it you remember?
I remember a time before they came

when I was alone
and only water touched my skin
and now
after all my experience
I don't know

what touches your skin now?

o armor soap and ferryboats
and cats have whiskers
and their hands trail down my arm
they like to touch my hands
maybe someday I'll reach out of myself
and the rest of them will be there

but our time is spent
and the broken hour
loves you
again
do you understand?
you're coming back tomorrow

there's too many dreams between now and then

Hello I had a dream you have to guess
about this boy I know and what he did
can you guess?

did to you, you mean?
no, why do you say that
it wasn't that kind of dream
he taught me to whistle
and when I woke up I called him on the phone
and whistled when he answered
and I could
he must have thought I was out of my mind
he didn't even recognize me till I explained
do you think we somehow know
when we're in someone else's dream
they have such power over us
when they appear, I feel surrounded by him
he's out there at his desk
and also in my dreams and in my head
it's not fair, I wonder if he dreams of me
I wonder if he masturbates

did you ever ask him?
I mean thinking about me
did you?
do you?

but do you, thinking about him?
that's really not important
it doesn't count
what I decide to think about

only the dream matters
because he comes by himself
and stands there and looks at me
and then I begin to remember

2 October 2002

I'm trying to understand the sensations that dissolve in me
that make me what I am
how can so much depend on sensation
water on my skin
and not on will, not on what I want
or what is really good for me
just what I feel
so I keep coming back to the same situations

situation of the body
who lets me feel
so riverbeds are full of fire
why do you say that
being partial to images of ice
the same place happens to me again
can you cure me
or help me keep sensation rational
there are people who want to be hurt

why is that, do you think?
maybe hurt means something new
a kind of orthodox religion

excitement of finally feeling feeling
from the skin all the way in
the tree of the nervous system
a tree on fire

to be the object of immense attention
the way the sun must feel
the burning burning
center of the universe my burning skin

your skin?
that's how I think about it
the alarm is broken so the fear can sleep
finally someone totally pays attention to me
I become the object of their strenuous exertion
I had a friend who liked to go to doctors
getting that attention she was never sick
never healthy she liked them to examine her
especially when they suggested drastic courses of action
she could think about for months afterwards
one time she sued one because he touched her
isn't everything we do about getting attention?

how do you feel when you ask that question?
I feel as if I'm close to the gutter
if I'm not careful I'll be rolling in it
do you mean attention is like filth?

I don't know what it's like I just want it
just want to wallow in it
till I've had enough
I've never had enough
it is healthy of you to recognize this, you know

I don't know anything
all I am is wanting
I hear you say that but I wonder
I wonder what wanting really means to you
if a man is sitting by a river
and says he's thirsty
and doesn't try the water
does he really want to drink
or does he somehow take pleasure
in the sense of longing
or even in the feeling of deprivation?

for one thing I'm not a man
I'm not a metaphor either
and my life is spent among your waters
everything is a river
I have thirst but I have no mouth
do you understand?
I am not made like the others
I don't want to have a child I am a child
I want the precise articulate attention

a very bright and talented and attractive child
gets from her mother and her father
who know that she's a little bit beyond them
I want that from anyone I value
and what's wrong with that
I scorn them if they do not feel me
and they don't answer me
with discernment and palpable affection
touch me
get out of your chair and touch me
here which can be anywhere
the voice decides

3 October 2002

Speaking an unknown language
I come in here talking
and you pretend to understand

there is understanding someone's language
and understanding what someone's saying
they are not the same things
where does language come from in us
is it just a long agony
a left over wound of childhood, birth,
language is trauma

is every word a cry
outcry outrage

I want to get out of this room
you know smoking is a filthy habit
we both do it
if you smoke to make me feel at home
I'm not at home and I know it
I'm somewhere else
in your willing clutches

willing? you mean it's your will
that you're in my clutches?

I think it's raining now
I love rain sometimes I want to go and see
why don't you have windows in this room
there are window but the drapes obscure the light
the way stories that we tell conceal the truth
so you think everything I say is a lie?
not at all, I think it is a little like you say
what you tell me is an outcry
beyond which the truth will lie
like the echo after the shout in the deep woods
and then the silence after

did you say truth lies?
I mean truth is to be found
I wish someone would find me
find me and treat me as I deserve

the love that longs to me
belongs belongs
I am trying to find you now
isn't that what we're always doing?
I don't know what we do
I come into the room speaking in an unknown language
and you ask me questions
in a language you try to make sound like mine
I grant you that, you try
and then the time is up
and I take myself and my stories my poor dreams
my lies you call them
back out into the rain

have you ever thought of asking me
what you want me to tell you?

sometimes I fall asleep at night talking to you
calling your name sometimes instead of the telephone
terrorphone it's so humiliating
arguing with you till I fall asleep
and then I'm supposed to save all my dreams for you
all those hours wasted talking to you inside me

what do you want me to say
it would be all right if you told me now

of course I want to give you what you think you need
tell me now
and tell me true
there's plenty of time
how many miles in an hour
honestly I don't know what to say
I want you to want me best
most, I want to be your best
patient, the one you look forward to all week
the one who is your challenge and your consolation
I want you to go home to wherever you live and dream about me
I want you to lust for me in your easy chair
and when you stretch out beside your sleeping wife
but I don't know what I want you to say

Do this now please close your eyes
and see yourself right here sitting with me
and you see me opening my mouth to speak
you see my tongue and teeth
I look at you openly and I begin to talk: now quick
tell me what I say

I think you say I don't have to pay you anymore
that would be the sign

the sign of what
that you are you and I am me

and we are actual
it would be the sign of love I think I need to hear
and why do you think I would say that?
because you finally began to feel me
feel something for me
not just this ersatz empathy you feed me
feed me feel me
that's what I'm saying
can't you understand?
I'm different
and my difference is wonderful
and you should cherish every hour
I come to spill out my guts to you, you shit

it's interesting that you bring this up now
at the end of the hour there is always money
a check also is a sign
maybe? a sign of hearing

I didn't think I'd ever let myself talk this way
I'm sorry for the bad word I called you
it just slipped out
it's all right you know
what you call me
is part of my name
the name you call me in your head

Don't remind me of those nights
it's getting dark outside now and I bet it really is raining
you can go to the window and look

do you want to watch my body moving
do you want me to watch you, is that what you're saying,
I don't care if it's raining
I love rain sometimes especially
just when the lights come on
and all the phony colors look so pretty on the wet streets
like paintings or movies
Singin' in the Rain did you ever see that
a long time ago on black and white tv
an upstairs guest room I had to sleep there
one night because my aunt was sick
and had to use my room downstairs
and now the time is really up
and you leave me up here in the attic
where can I go
out into the beautiful wet light
tail lights tail lights
who will really listen to me
and really understand
I'm so tired of this you listen you say nothing
you never tell me what to do
not a fucking thing here's your check
I hope you dream of me all night

You went to school in Europe, right,
well did they ever make you study poetry in school
did the teacher stand in front of the class
reciting a poem the way they do
big false voice
the way they read it makes you never want to read it
it's so insincere
it hurts the words

what's insincere
the man the poem
the one who wrote it
all the words
if you can do that to do
the words are sick
the words stink
all words do

why do you bring that up right now at the start
did you read some poem?

you're being obtuse deliberately obtuse aren't you
I'm not talking about poems
I'm talking about the way people talk
when I come in here we talk like poems
the words are supposed to be terribly significant
charged with meaning, every slip of the tongue

is a big deal, something you get all excited about
even if you don't say anything I see you squirming with satisfaction
that I've made some mistake that gives me away

not you, it's not you
it gives away
but the desire that lives inside you
that needs a voice
that takes any chance it gets

whatever, you pounce on me, it's like
a kabbalah of a conversation

but you know our talk is not exactly a conversation
well it should be, what is it then
what is it like to talk
the words come out of my mouth
but am I speaking?

sometimes I think I come in here
and it's the only time in the week I tell the truth
other times I think it's just a game
an expensive fifty minute poem I have to make up
some women go to spas but I come here
can I confess that I rehearse our meetings
can I confess I think up things to say and love to say them?

many patients tell me that, do you think
you prepare for our meetings
to keep from telling me something else
isn't rehearsal an ultimate form of control
you come in here with a script

but you do too, the whole line that doctors have
they must teach you in shrink school
so we're just exchanging cues and shtick
is that how it feels to you, our conversation
whatever it is, how does it feel to you

no you're right it doesn't feel like that
most times it feels as if we're really talking
you know, I've been meaning to ask
we're both men but you have women too
I've been wondering is there a kind of analysis
where people touch each other
cause sometimes all I really want is contact
a hand on me my hand on
whoever it might be
is there a school that goes that way?

isn't there plenty of time in the week for touch
why do you need the touch in here
because this house would be different then
the real question would get answered

where is my body

that is a very interesting question, tell me more

answer me first, is there a school that touches

is there a school

where the sun comes up

and a girl comes down the stairs

and stretches her body over mine

and she lies on top of me

presses her mouth to my mouth

and breathes me

and her body is blue with bruises

blue with love

like the summernight sky

and she covers me like that

sky over earth

and tells me the truth

and never leaves?

that's what your science should set out to find

find the stairs that she comes down

the little teeth that give such kisses

lovebites the stars are

and I am outstretched waiting

why is she bruised?

maybe I am bruised

and the color is reflected

on her skin
anyhow I know the stars
are on her and they press on me

why are you waiting for her
don't the stairs go up also
like Jacob's angels going up and down
why down you go up and find her

I never understood that story
my father's name was Jacob, did I ever tell you that,
I used to wonder where he kept his ladder
I heard about all that in Hebrew school
why could he see angels
and all I had was the Brady Bunch
I asked him once
and he looked at me like I was crazy
the way he did and I said no more
the way you look at me right now

you never told me why you want to hurt the girl

Here I come to tell you all the truth
so listen hard you gospel-hungry Viennese
says the first measures of the first Brahms concerto
but by the end after all the noise and portent
the truth is what any body says

here I am, alone and shivering

nightfall hurries inside me

can you help me now

when all the dying is

inside me, when my desire

faileth and man — I am a man —

goeth to his long

home I think this means the grace

the music buries me

I am buried in my lost desires

though in my will I ask to be cremated

help me

I am a muscle in spasm

I can't let go of what I can't take hold

is silence only in heaven

don't you ever get bored with us

the wailing of your empty children

our fantasies our vague dream life

we half remember and half make up

don't you get tired of our lies

our sudden insights our brilliant truths

we forget by next time, don't you

ever get tired of money

a word renews itself
by coming out of a fresh mouth
no two mouths
can say the same word
ever, no two people tell the same story
and that is why we value the dream so much
not just what you see in the night
but how you tell it
the dream man and the telling man
so that's why you send me your dreams when you're on vacation
because a dream is the soul's fingerprint
an absolute, a distinctness, a special
song only you can sing
your dream

come down the runway and take off your clothes
we kept getting lost in the old house
lost from each other
then you'd find me again
do you ever dream of me
does the dream tell you your desire
does it speak your difference
each one of us
master of our own deep desire
and only each can say what that is

only they never say it

go to the grave with that sweet
necessary secret warm in their mouths
and all my work is to encourage you to know
to know it even if you never tell me
each man has to guess his own secret before he dies
that is all that folklore means
that is what all the stories tell
learn the word your body will not tell
learn it and speak it to me

but actually you haven't finished the dream

there were birds in the room as there so often are
but big ones, bigger than gulls but from the sea
small eagles too and a thing like a white raven
one of them came flying hard against me
and actually crashed through my ribs
and embedded herself completely inside my chest

tell me more about what bird was it that came in
I only saw the shadow of it coming
I think the white one
because when I close my eyes I see white inside me
pale like a winter morning
like the Baltic like Berlin I don't know why
winter is supposed to be dark
but there is a special light at ten a.m.

on a snowy day in Germany
not like anything else in the world
you can smell wine on everybody's breath
from the Christmas market and

how did you come to visit Berlin
I lived there for eight months
I had a fellowship to study
before the Wall came down
I was in the east
I love those huge empty streets
open city
morning winter help me
I lost something there

what did you study>
how the big insurance compies
weathered the changes
from Prussia to German Empire
to Weimar Republic to Third Reich
to the DDR, always
through all that horror people were insured,
bought policies, paid premiums,
died and left widows to collect
we never think of that in history
but things are always going on
markets and documents and income tax

sometimes we break our heart with living
what does anybody know
how long we have to dream

Is the bird still sitting in your belly?
not down there, it feels
as if some pale music
had replaced my heart
that winter morning lives in me now
but why a bird
what do you associate with a white raven?

the living death
do you feel that way now?
something in me is always dying
just like this clock is running
and all the running is losing, is fleeing,
running from no one to nowhere,
and I know my time's already up
but that's all right
I feel better now that I've told you
something but I don't know what
birds or death or life insurance
I feel relieved at least
relived
something maybe in the air
maybe I just wanted you to know