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If I could sit down just once in your chair  
I could fly the way you do  
only I don't think you know you're flying  
you just sit there saying what and why  
but meantime you're sailing over me  
like an asinine Chagall rabbi over  
all the countries I am  
do you know how big I am  
how really important I am  
you've been flying for an hour  
and all you see down there is me  
I am the lake that looks so pretty in the Minnesota sun  
I am the field of red cattle shuffling along  
I am the well a man bends to drink from  
you get the picture but you just think  
you're talking to some girl in trouble  
if I could get in that chair for an hour  
I could show you something  
I'd make the world listen to me  
make them eat my shit for a change  
you too for a change, I wonder  
what part of Poland did your mother come from  
was she Jewish

She still is

I'm glad

to know when something's over  
is not the same as finish it  
I think it's time for me to go  
I'm not getting anything from you anymore  
I come in and tell you my dreams  
but I know them already, they're mine  
and you don't explain them any more  
what good is that  
you never tell me yours  
you sit in your flying chair  
and I get to watch your shadow on the ceiling  
it's as if there are two of you  
the one in the chair pretending to listen  
but really just waiting for the moment to slip the knife in  
and that other one on the ceiling  
pretending to be just a shadow  
of a man in an armchair  
but it shows the truth the real thing  
huge and hovering and dark and always above me  
your little desk lamp shows the whole thing  
ogre doctor over me

did you know the original language was Hebrew  
not the Hebrew that Jews speak now  
but something before that, and every language  
comes from it and all of them distort the original  
meanings God gave to the words

but Hebrew keeps more of the pure meanings  
did you know that? there is a website  
that explains this, and that's what we should be studying  
instead of going to the moon and attacking each other  
and fussing over crazy dreams, the real meaning of words!  
because God said the words first  
and the things came forth out of nothingness  
just by his words and were there  
suddenly, all the things and all the words,  
just as he said them  
like a man saying the name of his friend  
and opening his eyes and the friend is right there  
standing beside him to comfort him and touch  
the words come first  
and I read somewhere there was a rabbi once  
who thought the words came even before God  
and God too suddenly was just there  
when someone spoke his name  
but who said the word then  
by whom is it we are spoken  
that's what we should be trying to find out

Don't you think we do this a little  
when we talk about what you remember  
and what you dream  
aren't we trying to find the original words  
that spoke you, that's a nice way of putting it

or that you spoke, or that you heard  
when you were very young  
because there's not so much difference is there  
between speaking and hearing  
it's the same word isn't it  
no matter who is speaking?  
so this is the question of who we are  
or being defined by what we hear

Did I tell you my new dream yet  
no we've just been talking about language since you came  
well all I remember is the end  
I was or someone was  
doing some work beside my house  
and a few inches down below topsoil  
we ran into something hard  
so we cleared the dirt away  
and there was this strange thing  
a long wide tray like a baking pan  
six feet long and three feet wide  
blackened but not corroded  
we took it up and it was empty  
except for a notebook at the northern end  
a school notebook the pages still clear  
the book was dry and we could read it  
but most of the pages were blank  
a few scattered here and there through the book

had texts or formulas written on them  
in different color inks some pages red some  
black some blue but most were empty  
only with those faint blue lines  
what do you think it means?

how did you feel about it when you found the book  
I leafed through it surprised that it was still dry and not rotten  
the pages slipped open easily  
and there was no smell

but how did you feel

I feel it's what the patient says that counts  
I mean what is written down or declared  
not all the empty pages  
the doctor should be satisfied with what we tell

you felt that in the dream?  
no I think that now

but what did you feel?

I felt an obligation  
I didn't like the feeling  
I felt an obligation to take the book with me

I felt an obligation  
I didn't like the feeling  
I felt an obligation  
to take the book with me  
for the rest of my life  
fill all the empty pages  
I didn't like the feeling  
something is in the world  
that won't let me alone  
I had to fill the book with writing  
and I have nothing to say  
why do you think the book was underground  
it was buried by a former tenant  
past of a religious ritual  
no I mean why do you think you dreamed about it under ground  
if all your feelings were about the obligation  
the book could have been found lying on a table  
or come in the mail, why under the ground  
I guess because we had to dig to get it  
we? I don't know who was with me  
but someone was maybe it was you, maybe  
What was it you lost in Berlin  
why do you ask how do you know about that  
you mentioned it in passing the way we do  
another slip you mean? a night without a day?  
I don't remember telling you  
it's not important

but what was it?

on the little blue bridge in Charlottenburg  
I was standing staring at the official swans  
it was a blue morning though with crows  
shouting in the palace grounds by the Belvedere  
I was leaning on the railing looking down  
and suddenly I was conscious I let something go  
not meaning to, conscious of having been unconscious  
it was just a little paper bag I carried  
stuff from the drugstore a box of band-aids  
i saw it floating in a circle down below  
and one of the swans came nosing at it  
pecked it and the bag got wet and sank  
I felt terribly bereft I don't know why  
I didn't need the bandages I bought them  
Just to be on the safe side I felt so sad so powerless  
I can still feel it as we're talking  
the feeling of my fingers letting go of the bag  
all by themselves, why, why  
do such things have to happen  
am I so little in control of what I do  
that my fingers have a life of their own  
I was so scared I trembled, what else might  
my body decide to do all by itself  
while I'm busy with some swans  
What was going on in your life that day?



nothing just stuff at the university  
wandering around a lot, I had just come back  
from a weekend in Poland  
one of those cities where they still speak German  
but the vegetables were better than Berlin  
I walked a lot in the woods and farms  
I remember stumbling and falling over a tree root  
in a forest full of sunlight and I sprawled  
on moss and mushrooms and loved the smell  
of where I had fallen I just stayed there a while  
and when I got tired of the ground I faced the sky  
little patches up there blue and gold  
I think it's a good thing to lie on the ground  
it's like recharging your batteries  
plus you can never fall any further  
there you are precisely balanced  
between heaven and earth at peace  
what did you think about as you were lying there?  
all kinds of things, strange you should ask that  
my mother, I thought I heard her voice  
telling me not to work so hard  
and I wasn't doing anything all that time  
just doing the minimum and having fun  
but still she spoke, I mean I thought her voice  
I don't know what else I thought about  
does it matter, I was just so comfortable  
sometimes I wonder why I ever got up again

it felt as if I had found my place  
I could grow like mushrooms in the woods  
so why do you think the lost band-aids led you here today?  
I guess I expected to be wounded and they fell by themselves  
so there's no way I could protect myself from getting hurt  
rose petals don't cure slit wrists  
that's something my mother used to say  
what does that expression mean I never heard it  
I think it means you can't heal real wounds with sweet talk  
I mean I guess wrists are self-inflicted wounds  
and rose petals are lover's sentiments  
people are in pain and lovers try to bullshit them  
nobody can know somebody else's pain  
so it's up to us to keep from getting hurt  
do you feel that what you've said is a critique  
of psychoanalysis and me in particular  
are the clarifying words we use, the insights won through to  
are they just bullshit that doesn't touch the pain?  
maybe it does mean that but I didn't mean it consciously  
I do think I get some benefit from all this  
it doesn't take the pain away  
but it gives me things to think with  
Did you see anybody in Berlin those days?  
see o you mean sleep with, no actually  
just an old friend from home who came for a few days  
just a weekend on the Baltic  
up in Rostock one hot summer

it was fun while it lasted  
but we both had other things to think about  
all I can say is what I see around me  
when I close my eyes the words stop coming  
it's so hard to talk in the dark  
the words I say are like power leaking out  
like that passage in the gospels where Jesus says  
I felt my virtue go out of me  
virtue once meant power once  
but when I close my eyes my power grows  
nothing is gained by talking  
maybe I misunderstand this process or your motives  
but I come to hear you not to talk  
I want this to be what it says on the door  
Come In & I Will Talk To You  
I want you to analyze my psyche  
I don't want to waste  
my soul's strength  
in talking, Christ  
all these words  
there's never an end to it  
isn't it all right if I just listen  
I promise I'll tell you the truth  
and listen hard and take your guidance  
just let me listen to you talk to me  
Looking at the hand as it's in the act of writing  
staring at your lips

those rare moments when you let me see you  
and you are talking

tes yeux tes voix your eyes your voices  
because I don't know who's listening or who speaks  
I don't know anything about you  
just the world

I mean what the world means  
I mean I know what it knows  
nomina numeri that's all  
just names and numbers  
no essences at all  
we have no essences or  
somehow float above them  
drunk on difference  
on what we think we are  
eventually we pull ourselves together and go on  
into the swampland of excuses  
where your grandmother's run-down plantation  
still keeps its catalogue of slaves  
in the shack behind the rows of beehives  
where someone manages to grow  
what nowadays would be called natural remedies  
coneflowers and burdock old people pluck  
people trust their lives to you  
you have no conversation for

since all we are at all is functions  
with no essences, I keep talking  
because I would be no one if I stopped

tell me more about the floating the going over  
I mean we don't connect with what we do  
a man gets there  
gets out of his car locks the door goes away  
do you understand  
the machine is there but the man is gone  
we move things around and they stay moved  
but we are missing from this picture  
I can't connect with anything I've done  
so people hate me because I won't commit  
but they don't commit either, they too  
wear blue one day and red another  
they too are footloose and flee the deed they do  
or else commitment is a mood  
a minute when you decide that time  
is something you objectify  
can spill your moment's will  
out over all the years to come  
but this is nonsense because we can't  
remember what we ate last Saturday  
because we are nobody in particular  
and wear ourselves out grieving for an identity  
our own, that cannot logically exist

we have no essence, we are not what we do  
all we are is going on, to the next situation  
all we are is going  
I don't know why people have to call it running away

Tell me more about those people  
the ones who say you run away  
the ones who talk about commitment  
it's so romantic to pin yourself down  
like a corsage you wore to the prom  
you have to hang around your neck ever after  
withered and dry and smelling weird  
a dead gardenia on a living breast  
and won't death slowly sink into the skin  
from all the withered flowers we love to flaunt  
ya vas lyubil and all that love crap  
o god they want to tattoo the mind itself  
the soul too if we had a soul  
the wrongest book I ever heard of was *Noble Essences*  
there are no essences and they are not noble  
I think I'm not answering your question am I  
I hate to be pinned down of course that's what I'm saying  
but you deserve an answer  
this is a transaction after all between us  
I mean we're in our separate cars  
side by side on a no account road  
and we're talking through the windows as we drive

neck and neck, drag race for a meager hour  
you know what I mean, then the cars  
will go their separate x-rays and be parked at Target  
or snug in your girlfriend's underground garage  
or are you married, strange I never asked  
sometimes I forgot the simplest things  
like what is the capital city of the moon

maybe you're just afraid of marriage  
evidently, and I'm afraid of you too of course  
which is why I keep talking  
and imagine all my palaver is a kind of answer  
or at least to someone like you skilled at listening  
wise interpreter of what I don't know I'm saying  
I feel you're trying to flatter me instead of talking to me  
so I ask again about the people in your life right now  
right now the ones who bother you about commitment  
and yes by the way I am married  
though I enjoyed the symbolism of the underground garage  
so who is bothering you now?

it's not so simple as who  
it's all of them  
I see it in their eyes around me  
the terrible bleak faded soccer moms  
smug conservationists urban missionaries  
they all want me to approve their fantasy

of permanence and values  
house and heart and family and god  
the drunks want it at 4 a.m.  
stumbling back to the home they hate  
and still they credit somewhere something's fine  
the flypaper singing to the fly  
it frightens me if you must know  
because I only really feel like I'm myself  
when I'm on the go, I am who I am  
because I can leave the room at will  
someday I suppose I'll be a suicide  
just to keep moving

Do you do sports or athletics?  
Christ that's an obtuse question almost insulting  
you haven't understood a thing I said  
what has sport got to do with it  
when I'm on the move I don't mean movement  
you don't have to leap through the door to leave the room  
I feel you left me long ago  
and just left your ears here to console me  
but for Christ's sake come up with better questions than that  
but if you really want to know I run (of course)  
and ride when I can, I like the movement  
and being up there but I don't like horses much  
they're too big and too present if you know what I mean  
but you'll never tell me what you know and what I mean



you'll never answer anything I ask you make me beg like a child

I notice you said Christ twice -- is he a presence too?

one time he was, like everybody else

I had to go through childhood

and childhood had churches in it

so I heard a lot about Jesus

and mostly liked what I heard

because he was always on the go

had no use for family, kept moving

wouldn't even stay dead in the tomb

not even the earth could hold him

wandered away into the sky at the end

leaving us all down here making up rules as fast as we can

while he was free

so if I were Christian it would be to imitate

the gypsy Jesus that I know, the prince of being gone

and that's a nice name for you too I'll think of you that way

and we're really near the end of our time

so I'll ask you one more time

about the people in your life right now

I want you to tell me the next time

I'll tell you the next time

and I warn you I'm going to keep asking

I don't have many answers but

my questions will go on forever

He died this morning  
my friend a pianist  
in Boston this morning  
thirty years I knew him  
was so good to me  
he died alone I think  
but we all die alone  
when it comes down to that  
nobody does it for me  
I keep hearing in my head  
the way he played  
Satie's Three Fanfares  
of the Rosy Cross  
on my old piano  
flame mahogany  
so long ago he played  
it slower than anybody else's  
he played the true  
sound of that mystical  
celebration what sort of thing  
I never knew it's been years  
since I saw him what can I do  
what can you do with a dying  
with a dead friend you can remember  
is that enough the whole  
business of memorial

remember me I wish I could  
hear him playing that

so many things I want to hear  
Homer on the seashore  
reciting the death of Hector  
to a crowd of drunken men  
I want to have a tape of  
Milton dictating to his daughters  
or Freud why couldn't it be Freud  
he was alive when the Germans  
were developing tape recordings  
maybe somewhere there's a tape  
of a session with Dr Freud  
in London in actual English  
you could hear him talking to the patient  
you could hear him listening  
maybe they did record him  
maybe his voice got lost  
when the war began this friend  
of mine was from Texas  
he hadn't seen his family in fifty years  
he was the black sheep  
too much music

I can't get over these losses these arrows  
where are they coming from

so many seizures  
swept away the long brown leaves of the willow  
the glossy thick leaf fall of the maple

had you see him recently?  
no, not for several years, he was shy  
and didn't travel, his condition  
first arthritis then cancer  
kept him from moving  
much out of his apartment  
and I didn't often get there  
of course I feel guilty I always  
feel guilty that's what guilt is for  
to feel it, and he didn't want  
the young to see him old and feeble  
the strange shame of the dying  
as if death itself were somehow shameful  
the last indignity after all the others

the 'distinguished thing' happens  
and people sit around  
uncomfortable with what's missing  
and with what remains  
I do wish I could hear him playing  
Satie or Scriabin he was great at  
or Ben Weber nobody plays him now