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Not getting there before you do
insights I barter my soul for
Vienna paradox
the doctor is a devil
and vice versa both
think about all the great painters
and not one ever could find his own soul
only project it that means cast it out
onto the coarse cloth or the plaster
so it is found in what is vile
the squeezed out the discarded fecal image
what is left when he's finished and passes by
achorei the backparts of God
Do you think I am a devil and want your soul
for some purpose of my own?
well do you think at the heart of every conversation
there's a secret transaction
by which the world is changed
I go out of this room
somewhat diminished
some part of what I am is lost
left behind even though
some other thing is rattling around inside me
some coin of insight, some clever idea
you gave me or elicited (your word)
from my poor brain

what have I lost and what have I gained
is it just a flushing out and slow
seeping back in of my neurotic passions
you give me to think about
while the sickness runs my life

that's the strongest critique of what I do
I think I've heard anybody make
do you think it's the truth
is that how you regularly feel
or is it just now at the end of the day
low blood sugar and maybe we should meet in the morning

but answer me how can I get my life
to run a different way, I want to meet
a different kind of woman I want to stand
unabashed before my own desires
I want to walk out in the morning
and know that I am good
and have nothing more to fear than all men have
sickness poverty old age and death
I want to feel that I can choose
who I talk to and where I go
not wake up stifled with desire
for some random person suddenly cathected
with preposterous significance
not walk the sidewalks all too sure

the shadows point which way to walk
and the birds are critics as they mock my choices
your dirty pigeons my Flatbush parrots
everything mocks what I decide
there is no certainty in me
and my power fades

Can you hear my music from so far
the brief interludes
of living with your feelings
I mean my feelings mean live with me
we'll be together
along a smoky river
Florida or Alabama
in summer mist or after
swim among the crocodiles
there's always an Egypt everywhere
to scare me or enlighten
then mummify the glory that it wakes
sins of oil and cinnamon
the lust that shapes itself to every limb
gold gloss underground
buried for five thousand years
and mean nothing
except your hips are dripping wet
when you come up from the river
the St. Johns or Suwannee

and I hold you to me
sharing the waters
of what is suddenly a beast called us
and we believe in that moment
that bright deception
us and what we think we are
only it's me saying this only me
my reverie and no answer from you
a lonely song of northern weirdness
while the doctor listens
as if I were a gypsy with a guitar
and he an indolent landowner
enjoying the music but keeping an eye on me
to pass along my physical details
to the police in the next town
in case I stole
o god how I would love to steal
but there is nothing worth the pilfering
I look around his office or my life
and suddenly I have no hands
or those I have are all about just feeling
just a pair of palms for you to read
nothing for me to take hold with
just a text for you to read
I let myself want nothing in the world
I listen to you fill me with your wisdom
verbose enough to last till next time

and so I live from appointment to appointment
turning the empty hours to rehearsal
of what I think will make you talk to me
and praying for great dreams to come
the coins I pay as entrance to your circus

But there were so many of them going
all the machines I couldn't see the people
but every now and then a car would pass me slowly
and we'd see each other's faces
and all that going would for a moment have eyes
that never looked at me, I could do all the seeing
I could understand the highway with my hands
while my eyes could find them and decode them
as they passed on their way to their private infinity
I'd look at them then look away fast
afraid I'd see a face I'd want so much I'd never
want to live without, a face I'd need
do you understand what I mean, a face so true
that life would be false and shabby without it
I'm terrified of wanting what I can't have
that isn't even there to be had
fugitive face a memory before it's even here
I'd have to live alone with its goneness
I can't stand that, it happens to often
can't you understand how terrible it is
to lose someone in the very instant that you find her?

the flowers I ask every year and every year I forget
autumn sedum's one of them and who knows better
than a person who forgets the names of things
a world with nothing in it
but old men and young women
this man he moves in a wordless trance
of simple beauty will you tell me
is that neurosis or great bliss
doctor to pass through situations
without names just holding on
to the feelings of things they make on me
I'm talking about me, this is all
such a translation I don't think in words
tell me what you know
about me about all of me
how can this be
all day I walk alone
not a word in my head
and then I come to you
in here with iron bands
around my chest it feels
but talk comes out
from nowhere, where
do words come from doctor

tell me what it's like as you walk

around the world
with no words
what goes on in your head?
I see the images of what I see
redoubled on themselves
stronger bluer wetter
intensified by holding on
I hold on to what I see
to what's just passing
and I make it still, make it stop
inside me while I touch it
image stays with image
they do things with each other
fly or build or dance
make love to one another or to me
but I don't know their names
and they say nothing
it's full of sounds
my world but not the sound of words
I think the words I say right now must come from you
you have the wrong desires that's all it is
you try to fulfill them I try to change them
you hear no words because you aren't listening
all you are is wanting
and wanting never understands
Eros is dressed in rags and ignorant
he has one trick

and one intention
how harsh you are, my tender wishes
are all I have to go on
some of what I want I get
and some I don't get but trying
for them keeps me happy
do you want me to go collect stamps

indolent landau
the landlord's reward
those are what come to mind
when you say hello
from what I've been reading
since I try not to think
of what happens only
what I'm reading
this helps me understand
what I really feel
about what happens around me
the world around the book
am I right in thinking
you don't approve of all my reading

who rides in an indolent landau?
I thought it was a kind of dance
slow and sensual or is it sensuous
no it is a kind of carriage

don't you look up the words you use
I thought you were going to say
look up the skirts of words
I usually don't bother I just know
or know enough to make sense
anyhow we all make mistakes
I thought it was a dance
and how she moved
within it was so slow
the birds caught up
with their shadows
and the wind went home

so who was dancing in that dance you imagined
I saw two women in long white dresses
twirling slow around a standing woman dressed in green
the green one was drunk, a wedding in the woods
she stood there swaying with her eyes closed
while the two white ones moved around her
how did you feel about what you saw
I wanted to embrace the drunken woman
and have the other two dance around us
it was a wonderful feeling to be at the center
exciting to be with a woman who couldn't say no

were you afraid of her?
only a little

she represented I think
a burst of freedom in me
I'm afraid of going there
but it was nice in my dream
to be with her in this condition
and still be part of the dance
so the words you read are just triggers
isn't that what words are
do some people just read a word
and get a single picture from it
the same for everybody
all over the world
how could that be

most people don't read
the real question is how you do
you spend your life reading

I sit by the well
drawing out
pictures from the water
some people stare into the fire
I gaze into the water and see faces there
so many are my mother
and also places, faces and places
strange capital cities with statues
and snow sifting down on still-green grass

it is strange to see it snowing underwater
but that's what I see

Do the faces ever talk to you, what do they say?
I am a child of the child I was
I can't grow out of needing them
no, they don't talk I talk to them
I tell them things I don't tell you
because they are my mother and my father
because they are my woman too

I wonder what she really thinks of me
we've been together so long I'm not really sure
forgive me but wouldn't it be more practical
for us to consider what you think of her
because you never told me why you are together
it's just the way things happen, they fall together
and they stay till they're finished or something else comes up
all this bullshit about motivation and commitment
no meaning, we're just molecules in motion
but I still wonder what she thinks about me
deep down does she care about me?

if it's molecules in motion there is no deep down
and why should she care for a molecule one more than another
and you do you care about her
is she just another molecule to you

and the girl next door would do as well?
the girl next door happens to be fantastic
peaches and cream
I was speaking generally
yes and I think we all love that way too
someone like you
you're just a speaking part
in a complicated play
a ballet, you say good stuff
but you don't change anything
nobody can though, nothing changes
I like to hear you
the way I like to hear the news
what's happening
a way to think about myself
but nothing changes
words are just costumes
doctor you're just entertainment

The there is here now as the bluebird fell
somehow wounded through local air
oriole in willows, seabreeze upsetting my dreams
because once I met her I wanted
to tell her everything
you're the one
I want no secrets from
I told her and it sounded like a song

but all my songs have no music
and by now I keep secrets from her too
in fact it gives a certain pleasure
to hide things from her when she calls
no matter what I'm doing I say something else
I love to lie to her who was my truth
what does it mean I used to show her now I hide?

What do you think it means yourself?
I want to fold myself inside and die
once on the ocean once on land
a brilliant interlude between lives
like a hot wet dream in a boring week
the pity of it is
the pity
do you believe in incarnation doctor
life after life
I have thought both ways about it
and both seem sensible so I don't know
tell me about what you believe

a warden in a prison told me once
he sees the same man over and over
maybe we don't incarnate maybe it's even worse
maybe there is a limited number of patterns
for human life but an infinity of persons to fill them
so we are born or grow into old roles

and the face comes to resemble its mask
and the warden gets to walk down the hall
over and over with the same man, sweating
the same sweat, to the gas chamber
hearing and answering the same babble
maybe we do incarnate, I don't know
if so though who am I know
if I could be the one that I should be
would it be all better
is that what I should do
find the original man I am
and be him more or be him again
king or leper or just me
do you think I could find her again
in the next life and make it up to her
for all the lies and all the doubts
and we could finally be together
or is my thinking here shaped
by what I inherit from the form I fill
whoever it is I am, the me before me
and the me before him
do you think that I will live again?

your whole question of reincarnation
is a way isn't it of bringing into question
your sense of your actual identity now
do you think people with happy lives

wonder about who they were or who they will be?

maybe they should doctor

maybe happy people are the saddest of all

how about you are you happy or sad

I'm just about ready to give up asking and just be

a beautiful little blessing she called to give me

I answered as I was cleaning a fish

she knew I was in the mountains cellphones are wonderful

she just wanted to make sure I was happy

and make me happy if I was not

why isn't everybody like that

just wishing well and calling

my mind fills with variations

what kind of fish and pennies in a wishing well

and what she looks like and which mountains

but what I know enough to ask is Why

do you think she called

to make you close or keep you far

some people use caresses to repel

I never thought of that she's always so nice

so welcoming when I am with her

have you ever seen a spider in her web

she wants you caught in the strands

but not necessarily at the center
not necessarily near her, until she wants you
and comes to get you
people like to keep people
stationary in the network of their connection
people like to keep people on the shelf
just in case they're needed someday
I've never heard you so cynical
not cynical, accurate, realistic
haven't you yourself ever tried
to cherish someone in the middle distance
to keep her far away but still keep her yours

it's terrible to think about but I think it's true
we all do this you think, now I feel dumb
about that mountain phone call
maybe she's like all the rest of us
really wants me, wants me but not too close
why are we like that
why can't we let people go
or really be with them
why is it always in between
a midday terror, a fear
of losing and a fear of having
I feel depressed now

it's not bad to feel that way if you know why

help me to feel better, I don't know what to do about her
maybe the little gestures of love along the way
mean just as much as all the marriages
maybe we need only little moments and acknowledgements
a quick serenade and a night together
a postcard from Seville a phone call
while I'm filleting a trout, my god
we live from fix to fix, always needing
something new and never giving up the old
isn't it enough to be happy just this moment
with the fish in my hand and her voice in my ear
and we need both
the touch and the let go
live together work alone
opus solum work alone
the work you can only do
by yourself but here
in this room we do it together
a doctor is someone you can be
alone with and learn the ways
to interrogate the silences
and make being alone
turn into sudden sciences
till you know all
all we're ever going
to know about ourselves
doctor help me be alone

aristos means best the best one
but what is good is agathos
as if bad were gathos and good
the deprivation of some evil
quality as truth is aletheia
the deprivation of letheia
forgetting, truth is what won't
let you forget, then what is gathos
what is bad, we are led by bad friends
to waste all the time of day
rapping and ecstasy and crime
and all for what, for age and herpes and good night
no benefit, I take a medicine
keeps me from talking this way
I'm sorry I ever went to college
too many words, tip of my tongue
is dark with foreign customs
spook me into speech
then nobody knows what I mean or
even who I am, your turn, turn me off
and talk to me I am a pirate of attention
the world is sick because I am
and guys like me control the Pentagon
war is just a nervous conversation
of sick old men that children die for
only when a certain number of deaths are tallied

can the old sick chatterers fall silent
war is neurosis isn't it that's all
even I so often have the urge to kill
everyone has in the measure of their sickness
it is not politics it is sick minds in control
of everything but themselves, can you cure them doctor
before it's too late, is there hope for the lunatics
who rule us and the lunatics we are who choose them
sickness everywhere and no one crazier
than the admirals and journalists and judges on their thrones
does the supreme court have a nine bowl toilet
stop me from knowing so much about the world
if I can't do a fucking thing about it help me to forget
do you think I really need this medication
sometimes I don't take it do you take yours?

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