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THE MAZE

1.

Kneeling in front of her
trying to explain

traveling all day
you come to something green

it is different and sane
the mystery of it

takes you by the hand
and leads you

a little way in

2

when so close to all
all you want to do

is get through
to be at the center

to be where
she is most herself

the center
the place you

have all your life
been entering

and you know
it's all there

and never far away
so close you smell it

even when there's no wind
or so you think

never having been there
before yet it's where

you were born
and never left

3
wherever and however and in so many ways
you are trying to go further in

maybe you'll never reach center
but you have to go on

you would betray her and yourself
if you did not keep going

maybe her center is everywhere
and you have been there all along

if that is so then it is the nature
of the center to keep drawing you in

every hour you do not come closer
is a waste of all your godly time

4

there is so much
to tell her

sometimes you look up
her delicate body

to see her face
sometimes she seems

the most beautiful countenance
you have ever seen

sometimes you tell her so
sometimes she wears

her hair back and looks
boyish and trite

as if she were mimicking
who you are and mocking

your aspirations as ordinary
sentiments

clichés of feeling
in a hush of words

5

then you look again and she is crowned
and the journey resumes to the interior

you tell her all you can
about each stage of the journey

sometimes you get the feeling
that she is traveling with you

sharing the risks of the road
as if she were coming with you

on your way
to the center of herself

sometimes in your innocence
your arrogance

you think you are the only one
who can lead her there

6

so silent the maze
how could you not

go on
the tall hedges hide

where you are going
and where you've been

sometimes small animals
scurry under the bushes

to cross your path
a cat a vole a fox

you look at them and marvel
that there are other people

who move through this riddle
as if it were ordinary empty space

you marvel
that they know the way

you wonder
if there is a way for you

under or over
but you keep going

knowing it is so close now
because of how long

you have been traveling
sometimes you think

the hedges grow up
as you move

and that the desire
of your journey

makes a maze of her
who would be simple

immense mystery
of another person

in whom you move
always now

no matter when you began
or how long you sleep

along the way
forgetting that you are moving

no clues no signs
except a word

spoken from time to time
you take to heart

and spend all the dark hours
analyzing

so you'll be ready to answer
when the least light comes

7

sometimes you are brave enough
to slide ahead in the dark

keeping your feet to the earth
careful not to stumble

the ground will lead you
trust the ground

sometimes you like this best
the dark trusting

trusting her to be a road
that she is a road

to herself and wants you
as you are

constantly moving inward
to find her

you like the darkness
to feel your way along

but what if the last turn
is a low opening

you have to kneel to find
maybe you should stay on your knees

you feel the leaves and branches
sometimes there are thorns

sometimes you crawl
to find the least gap

fondle the emptiness
that lets you go

the truth of it is you like
to be so low

to feel the dirt
the grass the crushed mint

you crawl over in the dark
knowing only

it is not much further now
you feel her center

everywhere the power
of it all around you

you try to explain it now
kneeling in front of her

studying her face at last
truth of the sign.

15 October 2002, Boston

BIRD FEEDER

sometimes some pigeon
looks like a hawk
the beak curved down
the posture puffed
out hostile wary
Israeli politicians
everything is prey.

15 October 2002

Boston

THE TASTE OF MIRACLE

no accounting for it
how the lines ascend
of pilgrims up the mountainside
add one thing to another and

finally breeds simple
doing as you are done to
being done to as you are doing
rain in the tail

a cumbersome destiny
recruits you to the world the void
otherwise a ferris wheel aloft
most of the time reading the stars

the way widows do
cherishing their miserable freedom
here is Rigel here is here is Mars
when its light falls on my door sill

parsley will grow from the ice
you heard the hymn
the beaver people sang
There is a valley and the rest of it

still in the old language
setting fire to an apple on St Thérèse
chewing pemmican on Pentecost
because that year was cancelled

“give me the pain of the world”
do you think I’m just a survivor
not so I am a pirate an invader
I stake my claim inside you

makes us both rich I am your gold
you are mine and the gulls
carry news of our nuptials
whenever we turn on the sea.

16 October 2002

BINARIES, 1

we always talk in pairs
the said the unsaid

finding our way
so many lies

they all are
truth is the sum

when all the bad dreams
cancel one another out

and we stop talking
here, the morning.

17 October 2002

BINARIES, 2

To move at all
means to be double

right foot left foot
if anything

in the world can change
then everything can change

enlightenment
something is possible.

17 October 2002

NEWS FOR THE FINGERS

yesterday the pope
declared the five Luminous Mysteries

of the rosary: the Jordan election
the Cana alchemy

the proclamation everywhere,
the sambhogakaya

shown on Tabor,
the dark passage in John

house where the Eucharist
was made

the transmission
is complete

and the same old
hands busy to receive.

17 October 2002

she comes to find me
runs away from her friend
together we hurry
to the café, Vienna
in cheekbone weather
isn't there a music
that prophesied this?

17 October 2002

CARE

pay attention
to this
it touches you
closely

if I didn't care
it wouldn't matter
so what is care
it is a conviction

that truth itself
is to be found
within this vessel
the others think

is just some person
walking around
your life
is staked on it

the glorious
passerby in whom
the spark resides
just long enough

for you to come
close and catch
a little fire
you too

can carry
onward we
give to each
other the truth

we do not know we have.

17 October 2002

THE MASTER

Come to me and do
and let me rest
in bible silence
where unruly schoolgirls
are led down from detention
to the little river
in white dresses
and baptized there
to make some difference
only my oldest
heart can feel

I have their sins
they have my punishment

there is some truth in numbers
when you let them go out hunting
the way a violin escapes
from meaning one thing at a time

o bend your bow
a little penetration music
we pry in mystery.

17 October 2002