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MORNING BELONGINGS

an astute truth
trumpets from where
dream should play

but that dawn
theaters closed
just a word

instead of a story
a feeling
instead of a word

leaving me
with just this
you see around me

a desert of things
in the glare of morning
dry hands

birds own the distances
I am here
at the intersection

of their cries
a hard silence
between their so-called songs.

10 November 2002

THE TIME DEMANDED

Nowadays people want
urbanity in poetry
since they're all nouveau riche

but they want prophecy too
because they're scared

send for elegant Isaiahs
and see why Auden's popular again.

10 November 2002

PEACE MARCH

Children of the nouveau riche
on safari through reality.

10 November 2002

THE WORLD

The world's the weirdest theme park yet
but what on earth's the theme of it?

10 November 2002

WEATHER

Just mild enough to sit chilly on the deck
being severe about reality. Juvenal
in more ways than one.

The leaves though
are pretty at my feet. They make me feel
a minor god on a cheap vacation
full of cultural attitudes and no work to do.

10 November 2002

SURNOIS

Whence this vein of surliness
this terror this despond?

Grumpy grey sky
you look so sexy when you get mad.

10 November 2002

χεαλλαιγ

so named, I expect
adversarial
relations
as a New Yorker
seldom disappointed

but a smile
(north Florida, Italia)
disarms me

when I don't know who to fight
I don't know which end is up

but in my heart I want them all
theses and antitheses
and on my grave expect to see
I am the Philosophy of Both / And,
where you are and where I am.
I want everything.
I want everything again.

10 November 2002

ISOLATION ANIMAL

Sugar cane
it's going to rain

so many islands
to catch
a little pleasure

dancing persons
frazzled with music
no one listens to
but every body does

sugar cane
I need to relent

south my maples
and mangrove me

half submerged
I Floridate

sugar cane
all that passes for the best

like a door in Germany
opens into hell
the devil
has to eat breakfast too

I am the alternate energy
chief role in a bad play
ran a month and never knew
who won the war I tried to be.

10 November 2002

REGRETTING MY TATTOOS

I think I'm sorry
I ever let them
mark me

itemize them now
like Villon give away
what I barely have

yielding to you
what is left
of me

the blue scars
the scarlet traces.
I have no tattoos

I'm sorry now
the inalterable change
I did to me

in your name.

10 November 2002

BRAHMS, VIOLIN SONATA Op.108 in d.

a boy and a girl
playing with tools
the giants left behind

when they went back
to heaven or forward
to hell, *nephilim*

left this music
so much darker
than our pale hands

can represent
or understand,
all sense

lost in the sound of it.

10 November 2002

Dvorák's Trio in f, Op.65

I don't know

I don't know this

the lyrical excitement

of an unknown lace

death after all

might have something to teach me

somewhere to hide

beauty, *et ravissements*

the cello staggering towards bed

we are made of love

the way candles are of wax

and when love's gone

nothing can support the flame

but I do know this music

I know the dark corridor

through the mine

stretched below the sea

wherever you are listening

a light of some sort
finds you
or runs on before

we chase it, it leads us
element by element
down beneath the material world

till in an endless cavern
we see the star of alchemy
blazing like a little
saucer of milk below the table

always going, going away from us
but not very fast

a light we come to the shores of and go in.

10 November 2002

éparpillé sur le gazon

the phrase insists
it will be my name
a new word
a dirty joke
hear it and swell

paradox of participles
how can a singular be scattered

and how can all those leaves of grass
be one lawn

does it even mean what it says
or what I think when I look at it
the question we always ask
about the calendar
 it is November do you love me?
we live by reassurances
interpreting the smiles of strangers
passing by

dismembering daisies

count on me, I told her, and I lied.

*

so what is scattered on the lawn?
these oak leaves Onan's own

seed, the stains of light
that slip down through forests
the children's toys, the cookie crumbs
a page of God's diary smudged with tears

*

they teach us to bring one another
to orgasm not to make love
blood type O universal orgasm donor
they teach us to come
and make each other come
in a universe where we're supposed to go

*

lawn is to forest as x is to people?
I have no logic for this operations
I was left out overnight, got wet,
bats flew north above me
indifferent as the stars

I think there's a heart inside all this
a blood-soaked stone
about the size of a woman's fist

if I sit here long enough it will rain

the colors surround me
which way can I turn?

*

these stars my father taught me
draw five points in one continuous line
a lineage of sorts from the first days
how I have valued everything I learned
the sound of speech a trick of fingers

my father was double-jointed I am not
I had to use the words for that

a liar was something my father hated
so I had to be a liar to be anyone at all

*

in each small cake (Latin *placenta*)
will be found just enough nourishment
to walk from dawn to afternoon

after that you need a car or camel
something you actually believe in
a pretty lady you see in the street

*

even a cat will do, the incongruous
citizen of low places who yet is skilled
at leaping up. Suddenly he is there

warm and soft and dangerous in your lap
bringing strange pathogens to infect you
the awful purring tenderness of things

blinded with tears we lose our way,
we fall off piers, down stairs,
drive into one another on the road

a wind stirs in the fallen leaves
a yellow wind no matter how grey
the day, to dry our eyes

on this oak tree a swollen gall
from this make ink,
unsentimentalize

a cat
feels like money. A girl feels like a cat.

11 November 2002

(I woke with the French phrase in mind, and presently recalled or guessed it meant 'scattered on the lawn'.)

CAUGHT, & INCONGRUOUS

I was on my own way
and no one
had to be me

but they were,
this was the voice
that whispers from the ground

you heard it
when you were very young
on Sunday afternoons

when there was nothing to do
and the light went grey
not darkness really

but some other loss
through all the trees
the endless boulevards

all the fallen leaves
and you sat on a rock
or on the ground itself

what it said to you
was so clear
it was like having snakes in your lap

writhing
through one another
till you knew

you are made
of life and only
life and you listen.

12 November 2002

INSTRUCTIONS

Sit on the ground.

Handle things.

Listen. Listen
with your mouth

you never know
what you'll hear
until you say it

sit on wood
and think: water
sit in water
and think:

far

from myself
I am flying
to meet me

there, where listening
is. Warm.

Sit

by the fire
danger around you
and let the Safe Place
inside you
talk, lure
you and everyone
into its huge quiet
metropolis.

12 November 2002

