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## **DAS KAPITAL**

Businessmen are the craziest of all.  
They work so hard their pleasures  
tend to be proportionate, exorbitant  
like their profits, destructive to them  
as to their victims, clients, us.

I can't help it, I didn't make the cow,  
don't help you milk it, just put a little  
in my tea, like a man forgetting an anniversary  
every day is somebody's birthday, some and every,  
milk and sugar, to live in this society of ours

leaps branch to branch, hence squirrely,  
knowing nothing of the root. There is no root.

7 December 2002

## CONFESSIO

I don't have to prove it  
just have to say it  
it's more like human rights than science  
a claim in the nature of the material  
the self-revealing evidence of speech

and the terrible anxiety about words  
is: everything I say might be true.

Weapon and remorse of poets.  
If we say it, you can think it. And it  
might turn out to be so.

7 December 2002

## **GNOMIKA**

As soon as you start to forgive  
you give more than that.  
Before you know it, you know it.

To escape from other people's desires  
first escape from your own.

This works. The alternative  
is Sahara, the fitful wind  
playing with what belongs only to the wind.

7 December 2002

## MAUVE

Do you still want to be somebody else?

— I already am.

Who?

— Who's asking?

Oh, I see, you're being cute. You know my name.

— I do, but do you?

Cute again. That's boring. Wisdom is tedious in someone so young.

— Now who's being cute?

Is that a question?

— I don't think that is, either.

So do you, still, still want to be somebody else?

— Of course. Aren't you finished with being you yet? Don't you get tired? I'm myself already,  
time for the next role.

They're not roles, they're what we are.

— Then how can you want to be what you are? Wanting means not having something and wanting it, or not being something, and wanting to be it. Every time you want something you really want to be somebody else, the person who has it, or who is it.

So who do you want to be?

— Brutally direct now? Are you jealous of who I want to be?

I just want to know.

— I already am the one who isn't asking. Eventually I'll run out of now, I guess, and have to start asking again. I'll have to start wanting. Wanting to be the other person, the one who knows.

Don't you know, just as you are?

— Not exactly. When you really are someone, you don't have to know. It goes like beavers. They just know how to do. All this knowing business means you're getting ready to ask. You're tired of yourself and want to begin again.

So who do you want to be?

— I used to think I wanted to be you. But that was just thinking.

And now?

— Who do you want me to be? You must have some desire here, since you keep asking.

I don't care, I just want to know.

— So you want to be the one who knows me. Aren't you better off just being you? Can you still be you?

What do you mean?

— Wanting. As I said, wanting dissolves identity. People think they are what they want. They let their desires define them. Stores want you to believe this, so you buy. Every time to buy something, you're buying a definition of yourself, you're investing in what you want to seem. Now my theory is that the reverse is true. Wanting dissolves identity. every time you buy something, there's less of you. The more desires you have, the less anybody you are.

But you buy things!

— I want to be other people, I said I did, I've been saying so all along. I want to be the woman buys a soft new sweater. I want to be the well-nourished husband who puts the empty wine bottle out each night into the recycling bin. Those people are lovely to be, each one full and intact and glamorous and fun, waiting for me to be them, waiting to be me. They want to be the me I mean when I say I.

What colors sweater? I'll go out and buy it for you.

— Mauve, maybe. But I don't want the sweater. I want to be the woman who buys it. Buys it on a sudden impulse. So there, there's no way I can be her, now. But thanks for offering. I look good in mauve.

7 December 2002

M)ANY

So many looking at me  
each sees a different  
not even one is here

(unity is the most imaginary of all numbers

people snarl about dualism  
whereas One is the big puzzle, villain, conundrum

how One arises from Zero, or against it, or by virtue of some preposition we haven't tracked yet,  
the utterly mysterious transaction  
between nothing and something —

so, cadres, struggle against Monism first  
then Dualism will take care of themselves)

not even one is me.

8 December 2002



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It's the time when vision trembles  
because there's nothing left to see.

A sort of butterfly in the heart  
sees that way too. O settle down  
a minute, restless unbird,  
sip my sugars or whatever you do

you for whom the world is barely there  
so quick you move.

8 December 2002

## NO WONDER TREASURY'S IN TROUBLE

It has been winter  
for several weeks now  
in the thirties by day and in the teens at night  
like most American businessmen.

8 December 2002

## IT WASN'T OPIUM THAT SILENCED COLERIDGE, IT WAS KANT

1.

Philosophy is the jealous elder sister of poetry.

Tells her young and beautiful sibling  
Stay there in the ashes, gather cinders,  
from those clinkers, alchemize your ecstasy.  
And sweet young Poetria doth as she is told.

2.

Poetry is the beautiful elder sister of philosophy.

Wild and wayward she drinks too much  
comes home late, sleeps in, walks out  
in all sorts of weather, brings home  
feathered things, bright pebbles and infections.  
Poor little Philosophia has to take care of her,  
adores her beautiful wiser sister, interprets  
her tipsy ravings, cleans up her mess.

3.

Beautiful Poetry when she grew old  
lapsed into philosophy. Silly little  
poetry grew up and took to prose.

When she began she wanted to invent  
a new world every morning. Later  
she decided just to explain the old one,  
hard enough, the given the one that  
most children found new enough for them.

4.

Philosophy is the same as other people.  
Poetry is you yourself. The world  
is the thing that dying poets come to analyze.

5.

Philosophy thus became psychology masquerading as history.

6.

So many ways an argument  
can turn. All the apparent  
rigor of Kant is the stubbornness  
with which he attends  
to just how he feels about things.

Inner feeling drives the man,  
ardent Hume and chilly Quine.

7.

When we get home  
we'll know where we've been.

But how will we know it's home,  
or that we are the ones who get there?

8.

Coleridge skating at Ratzburg sees the shadows of the skaters zipping along through the water  
beneath the clear ice.  
Poetry embraces philosophy as the sun sets beyond a stand of willows still yellow in this early  
frost.

9.

They embrace  
and become one.

The sun is in my eyes.  
Why don't I move?

9 December 2002

## THE VISION

is of what the thing says.

Waiting sparrows waiting rock  
my enemy is my hands

my hands play down her back  
is there anyone there  
not interested in revenge

where is there a bottle so full  
I could not pour in  
a little more wine

blue wine of cunning  
and a gull, green  
wine of quick eels

where is the seabird  
headed over landfill  
by the waste disposal

behind the new mall  
where a little hillock's  
vents burn blue

flames eerie all night  
corpse fires  
bale fires spooking the plain?

9 December 2002

## **SUTRA**

also a thread  
of protection  
I wear around my mind

words.

Clinamen.

Certainty

to string contingencies upon.

9 December 2002

## ALBATROSSES

These are not the dog days of it yet  
but the great bird swooping across the *plage*  
frightens tourists sipping mint diablos  
who gather there because this little beach  
is safe from God's ornery hurricanes,  
no one knows why. No tempests here.  
Not too warm, and coarse its sand, but hell,  
you can't have everything. On grandfather's  
mausoleum it said You Can't Have Anything  
but there was the tomb and he certainly had it.  
Or it had him, maybe that's what he meant.  
It's so hard to know what little words mean,  
if and as and you and have and me.  
There are languages without the verb *to be*.

10 December 2002



## FAIRY TALES

Fairy tales are projections of our bodies' thought. From the dark of the body, language sends stories out like cries for help, like scouts to sense out the unknown terrain into which we are born every morning, we who live in bodies.

The story sends the body's thought, how it feels about itself, out into the world *to make its fortune*, as the old tales say, *to make its way*, find *true love*, fulfill its sacred *quest*.

What does your body want to do today?

Sex is the opposite of fiction, in that the body does its will almost undisguised. Is that why pornography is so seldom to be literature? Only an obsession the author's body does not feel or own or aim or know could be graphed into narrative, language pulling the ignorant body along, out of the dark of what it likes to do?

Or do some authors — Bataille, Acker come to mind — teach their bodies how to write directly?

So reading Bataille is so intimate and alien at once, like your own old cat curling up on your knees and reciting a sonnet of Herédia.

Or the moon actually trying to squeeze through the window and kiss the bosom of the sleeping princess — you imagined her that way, long ago, no matter how young, no matter how long ago, she is still as you imaged her then, unchanged, her quiet breasts attending the moonlight.

So the fairy tale  
is somebody's body.

For every person  
has a fairy  
who goes alongside

or a little bit in front,

so the fairy tale  
is somebody  
going in front of you  
through the dim  
researches of  
the eternal forest

light from the cabin  
far ahead  
you see the light  
before the story  
gets there

you climb the stairs  
into the cenacle

where he shapes the light  
inside his hands  
and offers

always offering.

You go.  
I'm after you now  
I'm looking for you now.

When my father lay on his deathbed  
he drew me to his side and asked  
in a quiet way "Where is my penis?"

Through my grief of hearing him say so  
I knew several things:  
that he was dying,  
that already his body had gone out wandering,  
had sent out a part of itself to find something somewhere  
he could use,  
his body had begun to go away  
and was cutting the vessels that unite — so secretly, so deeply —  
this man's body to this man's world.

It is winter.  
Birds beseech the feeder.  
Twelve years pass.  
My father's penis  
has found me another mother  
in some woods.  
Another mother —  
the forbidden rhyme  
all poetry was looking for.

The terrible crime of poetry  
which is pure awareness,  
tabu incest tries to hide it

We live again and nothing dies.

From the belly of the wolf  
the old woman comes again  
to scare the child  
worse than any furry old animal can

from the Oulipo factory along the Seine  
howls of Difference save us from the story,  
try to hold us  
make us sit down in the Square  
and watch the people pass the fountains

but the story keeps going through the woods,  
what does a story have to do with a city  
a story is always woods and woodlands

mappa mundi and the boy is lost.

The trouble with your story, dear,  
is that it soon leads into the whole story

and the story scares us into silence,  
we lose our way in the woods of certainty.

The material tells. Where is my hand.  
Where is my body when you need it.  
Matter. Certain  
curlicues of smoke or ground mist is it  
or eerie exhalation from the naked trees  
curve around us and befriend us  
like those narcissistic profiles of cute boys  
Cocteau drew so incessantly  
leading us on

cut boys with pouty lips  
sealed, Mum's the word

lost in the material, the maternal.  
of course the word is wood,  
the woods are what you always heard,  
the sound of the other moving towards you,  
always coming closer, around you now  
breathing that old philosophy of leaves,

what are you waiting for, keep still,  
*tais toi*, tax yourself  
with voluptuous silences.

Going into the story is going into your body  
and out the other side,  
do you know where that is,  
a story tells you, spills you, is all your  
body knows about the world.

Doesn't that mean I have to keep telling forever?  
Don't I ever run out of me?  
Or can a body lives without its story?  
The story tells you where your penis is.

10 December 2002