

12-2002

## decD2002

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Being willing to accept the end of things  
we walk towards a peculiar urn  
or vase perhaps Chinese you spotted  
in the woods, the blue of it caught your eye  
blue's not supposed to be so close to the ground.

You see so many things I miss, you always did.  
Like the wounded owl you got us to save  
or the path I still can't find by myself  
that leads to the strange rock pool under the cliff.  
Now this. I can hear both of us thinking

because I know the way you think, like me,  
a little back from the window, so you can't be seen  
by what you're thinking, just letting things  
settle towards clarity by themselves, like light,  
how like we are in some ways as we approach

whatever is hidden in the Chinese vase.  
Afraid of something in it we don't want  
something preposterous like jelly beans or paper clips  
afraid that there'll be nothing in the jar,  
nothing, and we'll have had our little life for that.

Everything has its history, but we don't want  
to worry about all that. Somebody put it here  
we don't have to know that person's story  
our own surrealism is enough, the hands,  
I can't stop touching you, even now, the devious

intimacy of last days. How can we go on.  
It's worse than anything I thought. Dead kitten  
neatly curled inside, it is a burial urn  
we've found, something Egyptian, unembalmed.  
Winter keeps it from corruption. Time

does not show us the same civility.

15 December 2002

**[FIVE XMAS STELES]**

(California, for Barbara Roether)

**WEAL**

**LHAV**

**ESUN**

**ONLY**

**YOUC**

**ANSE**

**EIT!**

(Atheist's Mass, for Jonathan and Tom)

**NO**

**EL**

**20**

**02**

(You Call This Snow? for Jackson and Ann)

**SKYM**

**ATTE**

**RFAL**

**LSPA**

**RACE**

**LSUS**

**NOST**

**OCOI**

**SEE?**

(Prairie Ontology, for Ken Irby)

I F I

T S R

E A L

Y O U

C A N

W A L

K T O

I T &

Y E S

(Film's Reason, for Jenn Reeves)

I T L O

O K S B

A C K A

T Y O U

T I L L

Y O U S

E E U S

T R U E

15 December 2002

End of Notebook 251

## QUIN PRIUS IN SENSU

Reject all know  
does not flow  
through sense sieves  
's what teens took  
as What I mean  
if the leaf  
I look at shakes  
in no wind I  
feel it to mean  
she'll call

a mind  
trapped in a universe  
of signs  
knows nothing  
in itself

all objects  
irrelevant to  
the quest must be  
ignored or made  
relevant. How?

A dumb thing become a pealing sign.  
Ring. Ring now  
while I look at the phone  
and don't breathe till I have counted  
the letters of your name

the knowledge of this sum  
drives out all others.

It is weary in a world of signs  
always making  
things do

And all the signs were negative  
pointed only to what I feared  
I forgot the phone keeps ringing  
she does call, all of her and him and it,  
the Minister of Grace is often on the line,  
the sign tells me how scared I am  
but I tell no one what it tells me.

For poetry is kite and boast and bliss and loin  
and none of my cellar stairs philosophy  
the dark grabs me by the ankle and bonsoir.

16 December 2002

## AGITATION MONAD

*a mosque for shelter*

Tile treading Submitter  
bow, a splash  
of fountains sears  
silent noons.  
My prayers  
are arms around you  
always, I  
am blind but they can see,  
lead you always  
to the famous place,  
Courtyard of the All  
where the mind is waiting  
to see what you've made  
of all you are.  
You have come to the hour  
where everything works,  
the fountain shivers  
in long applause.

16 December 2002



## **PERIL**

first word thought

word something

to live with

parallel run

beside the mind

busy without I mean

otherwise wreath

dusted with

anxiety evening gold.

16 December 2002

## CLINAMEN

here on this line  
the place to swerve  
a man's deflection  
is his constant

pulls him  
towards what he needs to be

look me up  
in no one's book  
the kind of man  
if man I am  
could be a flea  
awake on a sleeper

my schemes her dreams  
my mouth her source.

16 December 2002

## BEETHOVEN'S BIRTHDAY

herald of what must

come relieve the insolent  
silences my work  
comes from, my raptures

stolen from the closets  
crowded childhood

coathanger my harp my  
mother's old seal coat my flag.

16 December 2002

## ONE GUESS IS TIRED

Announce yourself  
before the banquet  
(did he mean bouquet?)

the celestial visitors  
contrive conversation  
to soothe your doubt

you too belong  
to a mirror  
delicately broken

a shiver in the hereditary  
glass a falcon  
stoops from the tower

yet she in fact  
comes back to you  
from where she lives

high over  
borne on a mathematical  
relation a dreamed

intersection  
in the marble sky.  
Anger

was my sin  
from the beginning.

The hard music

spoiled the consort  
of such violins  
elegant veneer

bent beneath a bad  
bow, a boy  
who barked

kicked his father's shin.  
I bring you  
the last flowers in the world.

2.

I was maze you trolloped in.  
Then you wizard and I wove.  
Then I watered and you yielded.  
Give. The sun  
in bare trees married us.

January days. We start and stop  
in clumsy metrics of desire  
sprawl, enjambe-  
ment, touch your cheek.

3.

now I was angry at anger and that's no better  
Nevada never Montana only in a dream  
I went around watching for that famous station  
in Wyoming six blocks long with penguins in it  
the corn house of Dakota I was there I leaned  
against the rugose wall I was vile I let myself  
remember all the things I wanted and still want  
you can read the whole megillah in my eyes  
I had no wisdom I had a car  
I have nothing to lose but my snapshots now.

17 December 2002

## FOR PETER KRAPP WHO KEEPS SENDING ME PICTURES OF WORDS

words fit  
together sentences  
are charts

are not say-so's, *Sätze*, set there —  
they are maps  
you show me

the way the power fits together  
the way money makes me talk.

A sentence is a map without a river.

We are water.  
You show us our flow  
through the stations of the sentence  
the mystery cities on the old portolans  
the unfound outposts of old meaning

the flow is what we mistake for meaning,  
that pleasant upriver in canoe  
through Latium with Æneas

or the gloomy Rhine Journey with you know who.  
That's what Thales meant,  
that's how water was, is, first,

fluid sensations, borneless, bornless, endless, always past.  
So Pindar: *best of all things is water.*

Where we go is all we know.

We Euramericans will never understand the *Mahabharata* because its heroes do not go by water, and when they have to cross the sea in the *Ramayana*, a god builds a bridge to keep them dry. On the other hand, Shelley and Heym really drown, while Milton just imagines falling through the air nine days from heaven,

*nine times the space*

the space a word takes up

on its way to the sentence.

Rolling stock. Cargo vessel,  
an old tub out of Bremerhaven  
two weeks to France, o God

and walked all the way home,  
with Paracelsus in disguise,

following the words you gave me  
broken over the table

o God do not let me break a bone though  
for how can a man heal water?

17 December 2002



## HONESTLY CIRCULAR

a blue scar  
abandoning ventry  
though it's the season  
misspelling is a minor  
breviary new everyday  
there are no hours  
there is only time

undivided so-ness  
and some more

screen door  
the snap of flypaper  
opening the roll  
reading the scroll  
we are virgins  
we are virgins  
till you read  
then when everything  
has been said

cough of youth  
stay home from school  
to go out  
you need more air  
more oil  
oil of keyholes

squeeze through

the slim intentions left  
when men build houses  
to trap women in

no wall needs you

you swing your arms  
against the cold  
marble sunshine  
workmen pass  
the children clueless  
go to school

it unfolds  
each little animal  
nervix anshus  
fratend firful  
every syllable  
a cry for help

mispronounce the world  
and save me  
from the rule

and say my name  
against the cloud

18 December 2002

## AND THEN I HIT HER

drew blood

my five

year old ignorance

of the moment

lingers, asthma

of the mind

a gasp of why

I know nothing

I am your neighbor

we live together

I touched your forehead

with wood

hard your skin

bled

every night

I breathe

your difference

in

the remorse

the miracle

they tell me

in the church

happens to be you.

2.

forgive my wisdom

it is old

it keeps me

going it gives

a better taste

to despair

to have some words

to stain my misery

we are another

country after

and the war

is waiting

3.

can it be

your father and my

mother

all this while

and we

are just numbers

on her blackboard

a set of qualities  
disguised  
as quantities

number, cipher,  
tell me,  
who are two?

18 December 2002