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Sunrise. The birds arrive.

One sun ball just up over Nashawena
two grackles one gull good morning

5 AM. Vicissitudes of sleep.

Waking. The light inside
is anxious for its sister light outside.

Three grackles and the gull cries.

Everything is being everything again --
a statement Dr Johnson would find

difficult to argue with but easy to despise
on formal grounds, circularity
of predication, fierce round red

just over the beach on Nashawena Island
where Highland cattle stand all day long
baffled by the undrinkable sea.

7 June 2003

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Bearing the conversation of the sun
is to be alone again

all my soliloquies
a fishing boat

becalmed on the bay
silhouettes of anxious men

a cat on the steps
also looking for prey.

I am trying to distract you,
turning from my confession to the cat.

7 June 2003 Ck

=====

I love you for your ball of twine
waxed, nautical, prone
to hold the knot we fold

pli selon pli he said,
a major constellation
in the smallest sky

and for the ripe avocado
that slips its peel
so easy for your salad

as if the whole history of art
focused on these fingers now
pushing green pulp on white plate.

7 June 2003

ART HISTORY

they auction

my heart off

till I'm at peace.

7 VI 03 Ck

PESSOA?

So many incarnations to live this once.

In my last life I used many heteronyms (more than you know)

to speak as much as I could tell of my one mind.

In this life I write in all their voices (and still more)

but sign my single name to all.

Each folly finds its proper fool at last.

Ah if even now I could divide me

into all my instances

how much you'd finally understand me

when I wasn't me anymore but all those

but maybe Fate would lose my actual address?

Fate never does. Fate knows.

I go on talking with my Angel

and let the world listen as she will.

7 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

=====

What had begun as sun
sheered into thinnest
cloud suddenly visible as such
--bluegrey angelwing---
only when the sun
found its way behind.

Kandinsky. Deep space
inside the lover the lover
never stops fathoming.
Some words are liars
from the beginning, from
the first battle sloshing
through the trenches of the sky,

and all the colors we know
and name so gaudy are
the blood of that first spilling,

shattered vessels, the light
parceled into hues,
saturation, abstraction,
categories, Spiritual
pressures to behave

a woman with her man.

Own me, I am about the light,

I came to take it back

but found my way inside you

better than the high known road

the little entrance but never ending face.

Initiation. Red lines peeled away

from the luminous blue places

where the dye soaks into the paper.

Sunrise is long over

and we are stuck with what we see

7 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

=====

I thought I had something to tell you
but I forgot between the bedroom and the marina
and the last thing I knew
a gull was carrying something away

no one could be sure
though the Freemasons had their own ideas
if an idea can be said to be owned
and the higher initiates of Ghee
were sure it had happened before

whereas I'm with no one
unsure and in love
with all the specious accidents
that interrupt the world

tough guys don't wear socks.

7 June 2003 Cuttyhunk

=====

Foreskin guitar

your belt

somebody's dawn

shoveled down

the throat of the ear

all your suicides

sell,

all the brittle

hacksaw blades

unstoppable pipe,

turtledove

caught in the throat

a cough that kills

by music

six old saints

sprawled in the sand

trying to remember

what they loved so much

about the likes of you

Alex up to her hocks in the Ganges

is pleased to remember me

me, a man, as if

I were some novel she once read

somewhere in between

The Secret Garden and Swann in Love

all my intricate details forgot.

7 June 2003

AT A GLANCE

Supposing myself
to be a mourning dove
sort of public presence all
embonpoint and solemn
fluting

I have proposed
a monument to all
such ponderous virtuosos
in the form of a newspaper
published every day of the year telling whatever
comes to mind to anyone
fool enough to read it

and then they'll know
their own reactions,
never
what the birds are really saying
breasts puffed out, ardent
at their seed despite
the tea-time rain
snarling in from the sea.

2.

So you will wind up with me,
a slim catastrophe
in fashionable clothes

bought south of Spring St.

for what my mother

would have called a song

and how can I get out

of our relationship, affection

has no divorce court to resolve

the boring differences,

dissolve the eternities

we tried to lock in weekday afternoons

but I still love your clothes.

3.

And in the local rain

the local green

generic potted plant

stands healthy wet

on our new deck,

so much mist right now

the long slim leaves

hold all the color

that there is,

Gerhard Dorn knew this,

the bronzy grackle

strutting over green
the colors of the Work
proceeding in the warm
horseshit holds
the infant metals safe
until they learn to speak

Gerhard Dorn knew
how to tickle silver
into singing, knew how
to tease darkness and fire
into the ardent
silence that is gold. Gold
tumbles from the crucible

and his wife is barely
stirring on her sweaty pillows,

*everything comes back
to us who know the colors*

and the whole tradition
of the Occidental wisdom
I can teach you
from one look,

look at each color and remember.

7 June 2003

=====

As by honor or
a sea welcome
the old language
gorse sparse
scratched into
a kid's quick
wits mostly by
mockery

a father humiliates
a son endures

8 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

Le non du père

I watch a father playing catch with his son. The little boy is on the downhill side so when he misses, and he misses a lot, he has to chase the ball as it rolls down the street. The father stands and watches this, smiling. It does not seem to occur to either of them to change positions. The father pitches balls that are easy to miss, bouncing grounders or high fast balls. He stands smiling, watching his son run down the hill again and again. The son in doing all this seems most interested in learning to pitch, to get the ball and pitch it back, like a real pitcher, to his father. On one of his returns uphill with the ball, he finds the father trying to interest a younger daughter in tossing the ball. She runs away. The boy waits patiently through the levels of his humiliation. By now he's tuckered enough to walk rather than run down the hill after the rolling ball. The pace of the game is slower. When the father occasionally misses a catch from his son, he shouts something I can't make out, turns, and slowly walks back to where the ball, uphill, begins to roll back to meet him. When the boy gets the ball back, catching it, when he does, in a sad old hand-me-down fielder's glove, he sets up for his next pitch. This is a big production, styling, as seen on TV, a real southpaw leg in the air windup. The boy is, for the moment, safe in his fantasy. Maybe neither he nor his father will wake. But just as I begin to think this, they do at last change places. The father misses the first lob from his son, it sails over his head, he turns round and watches the ball roll out of sight, then realizes he has to retrieve it. Slowly he walks down the hill. And when he gets back with the ball, the life is gone from the game. Fortunately for him, the little girl is in some kind of trouble, and needs to be attended to. Father and son go to the girl.

8 June 2003

Sunday morning on Cuttyhunk

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A photograph of me in heaven
not so easy to make out
but there I am beneath a fig tree
looking a little foolish
with a bottle of wine under my arm
(Chateau Pison '27) as if it
were the loaf of bread I'm holding
in the hand at the end of the arm
while my other hand is waving at you
and my big black-rimmed glasses
firmly set around my squinty eyes
just like a man coming home from work
and I suppose I am, but there are
no newspapers in heaven,
just grandmother stories and desperate
avant-garde post-fictional narrations
the mourning doves keep whispering at my feet

where they pick at the fallen figs
and I wonder why I'm not in hell
with all the canny Wanters
I thought I was, but don't worry,
hell is heaven too, who knows
whose blood is hidden in the wine,

and now that I look close

I'm not sure that is my face
I'm wearing for the occasion--
a Latin word that means a falling
or a setting as of the sun
or any kind of going down,

8 June

Cuttyhunk

=====

Will the paulownia
be in flower
this year in
the graveyard by the sea?

And who is asking,
come back arid
from love for Valéry
too much poetry

but he still wonders
what can be wrong
with so much beauty,
that peaceful rooftop

where the doves are pecking
or this year on a cool
Sunday after so much rain
will the strange Japanese

tree with such odd fruit
deep purple flowers
be ready for them to see
in the little graveyard

where there is no church
only the ocean hitting
on the shore below
busy with angrier birds?

8 June 2003

Cuttyhunk