

2-2001

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But how close anyone is to it  
divine entitlement  
of staring through the window thinking nothing

that's what I want to think.

in or out  
looking is space

space is held inside a place  
space runs away outside

but no matter  
how far it runs  
it's there around me  
inside me

and is me, in me, the matter of me,

that's why I want to stare  
out the window in at the world.

1 February 2001

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organized emptiness  
a paper bag  
from Dunkin Donuts

I am filled  
with the dialect of wanting

the dialectics of desire.

Dear Things, dear substance,

dear opportunity.

Who is this letter  
I'm writing to?

Say it the way I think it

Every opportunity  
a word on its way to

not yet is it clear where words go.

1 February 2001  
Hyde Park

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Sometimes the shrill guitar on the muzak  
sounds like the ancient Indian veena  
as a sign that the gods can reach us  
only through obstacles  
even our Good Taste, thickest of all our obscurations.

1 February 2001  
Hyde Park

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Don't be sky don't be distance  
Be presence as an absolute  
A sudden squall of snow leaves

Half an inch of purity atop the mud.  
Just like me. La boue  
Beneath the brain.

The beast. How romantique  
Of moi. No beast, no brain, no mud.  
Just an ordinary why.

2 February 2001

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It is important to lift the ink up  
with the pen, the pen with the hand  
the hand moved by the word I mean to say  
but what moves words?

The small answers of a country evening

Insistent memory that stone has  
presses up against our skin  
when we walk or give up and lie there  
stretched out, aligned with the earth's magnetic field

and what moves that?

2 February 2001

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brackish curve  
    into the slipstream behind  
    car on a slushed road  
quick

the bridge is a dependable catastrophe  
over actual departure

into a place that insists on its distance,  
toll booth, borderguard, weird flag,  
doesn't matter,  
    other country dope-fiend eyes

it was only a river but it kept us apart  
we scuttled the sky we swallowed the flow

we absorb ourselves in the abstruse doctrine  
of human affect  
    you feel me feel.

2 February 2001

## THE BOOK OF EXODUS

hit the hammer with the nail  
is all I mean  
to art the way to men

when women did them all the doing that they'd need  
six thousand years before  
between screwing angels and drowning pharaohs

and the People stumbled through the desert saying Why Why Why

I choose to inform you I am a very religious personage  
down to the broad tips of my black black shoes

2.  
devil country

devil country

sad vistas of conglomerate crap  
screeing down from sedimentary strata

now wait a minute wait a minute

geology is the strangest science  
because no matter what you do  
the Laboratory Animal is still alive

and the People tumbled through the question  
asking Sky

Sky, Sky?

My point is art's enough is art's enough  
and art is what we do in our two shoes

art is what I sing on you you sing right back  
art is walkstep art is call  
art is animal running down the hall

art is your hair flurrying down your back  
art is skin

a quiet desert this animal we in fact is dwells.



3.

hit the devil with the animal  
leave the hammer in the crystal cave

at any moment the light could fade could fail  
we live as we do to take

advantage of every lady comes along  
every man who saunters down this busy street.

3 February 2001

## SATURDAY NIGHT

1.

lively organ of a smug persuasion  
steeped out among gold retrievers  
SUVs huphup along suvving along

the filled crust of a somber pie  
eternal boredom of a Sunday morn  
while infants glom their lewdly nurse

no word makes sense when skin  
is still a sin the Bide-ball chains  
don't you believe no ocelot

needs more than spots to make a cat

needs more than sins to make religion.

2.

so the preacher's spare  
and stricts a little Oppen line  
to get from midnight onto dawn  
by virtue's turnpike

breathing down the neck of  
nobody at all

be focused carefully  
on you feel to do and say it  
long before you'd rate to touch

3.

better by light, what is?  
Better by touch, who is?  
Bigger by feel, we are

And then the organ breaks  
Sudden into cantharidian chant  
The pews are squirming

Beneath the letch of music who  
Ever let that choir be  
Made up of human bodies each

Particular is heaven and why not.

3 February 2001

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Apostolic resemblances colored map at the bottom of the bible  
*Paul's journeys* among the Romes *Twelve Tribes* where they are  
when they were. Pisgah is here. No Romulus, no Quetzal-  
coatl, no reddish tough little berries to make rosaries,  
no east, no dhikr, no display. Breastplate of an absent priest, yes.  
Blueprints of a broken house. When we were they. My tribe  
is the corkpulling with our laps small monkey business people

and we use shells. We live in the milder hells west of Lithia  
we tend to be obsessive and we like to squeeze. Enough about me,  
how are your politics in winter, what god gives you the fish?

4 February 2001

SOFA

sleeping presence close  
the sense of someone there  
maybe that is enough

enough to be close  
to someone sleeping

4 February 2001

## ARTICULATE THIGH BONES

Of a stranger animal than any I have ridden or been ridden by  
so that a bird crying at one a.m. seems almost natural — a lost  
child hurrying across Russia looking for quality woolens  
to drape around her heart. These are skaters' fantasies

like the libertarian goose grease that makes newspaper editorials  
vanish so quickly from the uneasy mind, busy a minute later  
with its own concerns. To dignify this chatter. What bird was it?  
Tweed and sharkskin and serge, a weaver's overstock, a miller's

daughter naked to the sifting meal. I have seen dumber poems  
written on coarser skin. Let me admit pervasive happiness  
among my arsenal of technical contrivances. Mood's all I need,  
a good education in the pool hall will find all the rest.

If anything more is needed. When the marrow is scooped out  
the long shaft is washed and dried, fitted with a mouthpiece  
it says ooo or mmmm or moo. Maybe that's enough to say.  
Anything more they'd make a Bible of it and make you obey.

4 February 2001



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old wall wet sand snow  
old wall wet slate  
shade fall people  
shabby doorways snow

wet stone curb snow edge  
old wall black brick wet  
shabby window crack  
crack snow old wall wet wall

I want to do more than I can do

crazed by the beauty of this ugly street

5 February 2001



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energumen, who,  
a spill of light  
between the cobblestones  
as if the fire  
were a kind of rain  
and ran there  
down the streets  
away from me

away into that mysterious thrill  
of other people's names

famous or nobodies they all had names

and these names spoke to the child I was  
had awful power,  
Grover Whelan Alice Ficken didn't matter  
John Nance Garner Arthur de Bra  
The names were the powers who beckoned to me  
At the end of every street,  
They were the lords of cobblestones and trolley tracks  
And green opaque water of the river

They were what the city meant

So I said them over and over while I studied the red brick wall  
Topped with broken glass behind which the bad girls were kept  
By sinister nuns, the bad girls, the ones who had taken pleasure.

5 February 2001

=====

measured by the blue standard  
the cup was very small

I could hold it in one hand a while  
and drink almost all of what's inside

never knowing what that taste was  
that lingered after the complicated muscle-work was done

swallowing swallowing like a sky again  
with everything in it going away

and the mouth is empty  
not even a word

6 February 2001

=====

I knew the ear of corn, I knew the pan of water  
I knew the door and the chair  
But only the window knew who I am.

6 February 2001

=====

star inspector brittle stucco imitating woodwork  
a house is a contingent demonstration of astronomy  
the whole sky is mapped as and onto every house you build

as above so below  
the broken tiles of genesis scatter in the valley wind

nothing remembers you here, nothing

it all is caught in its own dream, map traced on map  
love layering on the simple presences of what seems.

This is me screaming for your help this is screaming.

6 February 2001

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CALLING

*Vox. Vak. Vaks. Voc.*

Call me. Or is calling  
the opposite of naming.  
Name me. Or is a name  
what is given to someone  
who is not called.

Call me. Take away my name  
and call me.  
Call me  
until I can do earthly thing but answer.

6 February 2001

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reading the trees  
the way a spinnaker  
reads the wind no a  
crow reads the road  
no the sky reads the

what is this place on which we stand  
to which we give names so grand

7 February 2001

---

bone of a monkey bone of a man  
how old am I if you don't know?

7 February 2001

---

flower tree sugar tree tree of milk  
the road still knows how to walk

and anybody who walks with it  
will hear his conversation still

every path goes through the middle  
every voice is actually his voice

7 February 2001



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but the thing I really wanted  
was hidden in the depths of the temple  
stuffed like a mildewed old burlap sack  
in between ivory and ivory,

vomit dried on sheets of gold,  
wool from no lamb, a lamp that gives no light,

the thing I wanted was caught between everything else  
and you could call it this (and you often did)  
or you could call it that (and just as often that's just what you did)

because the reliable condescensions of your view of me  
were landmark enough for me to steer by

trying to find the ruined temple  
with the shabby bamboo trees too long neglected to make fruit  
the roof sagging down full of snakes chasing rats

and the tile floor dangerous with puddles of rain  
trying to find the place lost in the boring jungle  
the sleeping lepers stretched out on the steps  
too sick to beg, the dogs full of sores,

the peace that only a truly terrible place can have  
where there is nothing more to lose  
nothing more to bother us with hope

and in the depths of that peaceful quiet terrible temple  
the terrible thing I wanted and still want  
is waiting for me

as if I were its priest and it knew it and called me  
to take my place among the rubies and rot.

7 February 2001

