

5-2001

## mayE2001

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Given the parts of a vascular plant  
why should I call you flower  
when you are stigma stamen style  
ovary ovule seed of me

when everything I am arises in you  
so just as well call me flower  
I am your flower or strictly flower of you  
a brief colorful excrescence of your will to be.

26 May 2001

## MERIT

Merit, and what it's not  
a safety  
sung by degrees

believe a shipman  
when he sells the wave

or starlight  
when it comes to stay.

26 May 2001

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Sometimes we don't know the color of a thing  
a rag we wipe our faces with

never notice the sad fading mauve  
left when red white and blue have bled together, faded,  
fallen into another kind of holiness

the way old men do, quiet and scary and  
then they'll say anything at all  
that comes to mind  
or maybe even not that far  
from the rough moisture of just breathing

their voices like leaves rustling in the woods.

26 May 2001

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Why can't I take on your pain?  
Because I want to,  
    Because it's yours I want,  
Not his and hers and theirs,

Just yours. And the chemistry of absolutes  
Doesn't work that way. Love all or nobody.  
It all works, but only all of it works.

26 May 2001

## NUCLEOTIDE

Notional socialism is an angry giving that astonishes  
Uninstructed — or merely unobservant — tourists  
Clustering around the lead statues in the turbid fountain  
Located a few seconds of arc off the center of the plaza  
Emitting from seventeen gilded spouts vaguely arranged  
On the plan of a springing lion a very soothing water.  
This, consumed in moderation — gill or pint, no more —  
Instills a specious well-being that lasts through early  
Dinner and the two hours of operetta at the playhouse  
Ending only when armed police hustle them back to the hotel.

26 May 2001  
on the dais at commencement

## DREAM HORSE

Dreamt of horses  
or one horse only  
for all of us to ride

why only one  
among so many

but many was three  
why could there be two of us  
just the two of us the you of us  
why couldn't there be you

that we had one horse  
with an old clean woolen blanket on it  
and he carried nothing  
not even us at the moment

though one of us could ride  
later if it had to be

a horse is maybe the future

we will ride the old bone when we need to  
the clean blanket between our legs

one horse  
one noun among so many pronouns

what do I know about horses  
a horse is an animal that knows the way home

this horse carries nothing but the way

2.

Q. Who was the horse?

(who is any animal,  
the squirrel staring at the seed  
measuring his leap onto the feeder  
praying,  
who is his prayer?)

A. The air waits.

Q. Why doesn't he?

A. The time is right but not ripe,  
a flower too is mostly waiting.

Q. Where is the dream  
now you're watching the morning  
rain on voodoo flowers color of meat  
and all the rest?  
Where is the dream in the blood waking?

A. It never was  
but it did seem.  
And now the seeing  
decides against leaping  
off the branch.  
Or crawls up higher  
to risk another way.  
Now enter from above.  
From behind.

Q. But who were the innocents  
(you were) who trudged beside the horse?

A. Those who abstained from being carried,  
those who wanted to do their own work  
not the world's busywork,

let the horse go on without me!  
But it was the only horse,



the only street.

Q. Why do dreams always leave us sad?

A. Because they fail to keep us sleeping  
safe from the intolerable  
question of the morning.

Q. What is that?

A. A dream is a failure.  
Any word is a slip of the tongue.

3.

But if I am the horse  
(my doctor said I am the horse)  
then you are the rider  
(and the doctor also rides the dream)

you are my only rider

and I am the one between some  
thighs to come  
the simplest way of all  
a horse is  
a presence in the middle of you  
that makes you move.

But if I am the horse  
then I must be walking alone  
at once too slow and  
too far ahead

I must be out of the question  
not enough of me for so much of you

27 May 2001

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It is something to wonder about  
the woman in black fashion  
slipping through the gold coast door

a client of a strange hotel  
who visits herself in local mirrors  
while the lake is waiting

can you hear what I'm saying to you  
my words fluttering around your face soft as hair

I wonder

It is the wonder indigenous to the conscientious voyeur  
staring down the staircase you will mount  
soon enough into the seventh heaven

a world is what is willing to be seen.

As if you cared what I wanted when all your want  
encloses all of mine and all of me  
as the beehive encloses the bee.

And I am waiting too

lying here with all my special water.

27 May 2001

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Admirable distances reverie abolishes  
the way dream abolishes proximity,

these are the differences, the opposites,  
dream the absence charged with infinite identity.

Waking the same. Bringing there here.

28 May 2001

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A weak king wants to be in someone else.

To touch is not to know,  
To know is not to remember.

I woke early, knowing nothing.

28 May 2001

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Being certain.

A character  
You've never seen before  
And never even thought of

Climbs out of your clothes  
And walks away  
Body outlined against a sunset  
Baked wholly out of your own poor light.

28 May 2001

## AT THE EMBASSY

I didn't avoid the reception but I thought about it  
There were moons there and foreign preachers  
Coins rolling underfoot a lot of them  
Bronze mostly but silver here and there  
The way things spill I took a glass from a tray  
But didn't drink it just watched the ballroom  
Founder under dull music and killjoy to the last  
Can never leave a room at all confident  
I have done everything I could have done in it  
So stood halfway up the curving staircase  
Admiring the more agile dancers some of them  
Just a swoon or two away from being in love  
To use a phrase from my childhood you hear  
On classic movie channels to this day or night  
Grave as Walter Pidgeon biscuits for la canaille  
That's me I guess and go upstairs. Mrs Organ  
Was resting on the chaise beside the telescope  
I would like to wake her but don't know the spell  
Because hanging out with people is a riddle isn't it  
And leaving a party is a fatal wound received in dream.

28 May 2001

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But waiting for you here  
I realize hereness.

You'll never come.  
It doesn't matter.

I am where I am supposed to be.

28 May 2001

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Moods are our parasites

I thought when I wondered  
Why all animals have parasites that bother them  
But we have learned to carry few

The only lice we carry are resentments

29 May 2001



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A letter disappears in the sky  
from the sky

gradually, like an a losing its leg becoming o  
or o's hat dwindling till it be u

fading in turn till only I  
am left, pointless

a scrap of breath.

29 May 2001

## THE TREE OF QUARKS

So bound unbound  
    split into wholeness  
a new thing

parsed over the last words of some old phony  
    who tried to be not only the whole of France  
        but France a hundred years ago when it was lilacs

does it have the vowel of quarts or the vowel of Marx?

Marl Quarks is what I'd say, a brain with an id for an ego

All the distinctions,  
all the tender branches of that tree  
a child follows street by street into the ramifications of a word  
heard,  
    where does the sound take him,

what color is a name?

30 May 2001

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But it says nothing in me  
a silence like the flowers of the locust trees  
snowing down on sunny lawns at evening  
I could believe the back yard held such court

with no one on the throne, maybe a shadow  
of someone passing or maybe it was just a thought

a thought is a darkness too.

30 May 2001

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Exaggerate the incidence of light  
The venetian blind is made of angles  
Sliced sun sliced cloud  
You want to show me something  
So far away it takes my breath to see it.

30 May 2001

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who could it have been  
I missed my chance  
to get inside  
me a broken chain  
free at what terrible price

31 May 2001

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Sometimes I forget how beautiful beauty is  
especially when it bends its back towards me across the arch of time  
and brings its mouth close to my face and whispers a tune  
a little story I thought I was the only one in the world who knew.

31 May 2001

(listening to *Die Frau ohne Schatten*)

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## MARKETPLACE

In between the arches and the odd  
A melon seller sits among her wares  
Smoother than they, less ripe, and both herself  
And her merchandise are veiled by seeing,

The core of softness or sourness concealed  
By the glib glad sunshine of how we see.

That we see at all. That persons  
Cloak themselves in meat and musk and fruit  
And stagger almost blindly through a world  
Busy with wanting and forgetting,  
Frantic as birds at morning  
Tortured by the liturgy they celebrate.

Far cry from pretty girl selling her melons.

31 May 2001