

8-2001

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I haven't seen your flowers yet
the ones you've been planting
by your little house you tell me
and I always listen to what you say

but in my mind's eye I see you bend
in the cool edges of a hot day
to weed or feed or frankly
just to fondle one of them, red

I see it though the legend stresses blue.
Red among yellows, a tawny mulch
making the crash world neat.
You, of all people, I think,

because we belong to the legend,
the house we live in, we
it occurs to me to say, we
still are on the inside of some story

shows itself to us only in these glimpses,
woman caressing her flowers,
house on the brink of a dark ravine,
man watching, shadows, hurrying,

someone coming, wanting, taking,
gone. And what we needed of each other
is safe inside, suddenly, roar
of earthquake, lover's breath,

everything different and nothing changes.

6 August 2001

Let it be as if I had just awakened
and be morning, candid, not yet sultry
on what will be the hottest day
and through the woods I hear Whitman
playing softball in the clearing
and all kinds of birds here between us.
We are at the center of something
and imagine it as waking, we are waking,
I sit at a green table on a scrappy lawn
leaf shadow shakes down dapple.
The poem stops before the story begins.
That is its glory.

6 August 2001

But it is a species of descent
“lark or leveret” as signifier of
the morning. Signbearer.
Poems talk this way so no one listens

and they can do their secret work
inside the rhythms of you
where the magnets ride

while there is no story to distract you
from the space around you

and we become each other architects of void.

6 August 2001

Precarious means
just before ruin. Rot.
The green smell of mildew
working away under houses,
in dank closets where the brooms
sleep promiscuous against the walls.
I think you have betrayed me
but only the ouija board will talk to me.
I run my hand along your back
again, to find the wedding bell.
I've done it too. That's how I know.

6 August 2001

The law has yet to catch up with analogy
we can do something about the actual touch
don't touch relations of the world
but what about the woman who sits across the room
stroking gently something on her lap
a book maybe that you gave her and her fingers
caress the surface of that thing
as you would stroke her lap to begin with
and neither of you touch

what is the law going to do about that?
Shouldn't there be some legislation
that makes her liable to litigation
for stirring up unconsolably in you
desires that are all too close to waking anyhow
and making you think with your fingers
and talk with your body in this silent room?

Whose fault is anything anyhow?

6 August 2001

Bolstered by memory the sad yellow roses
hang their heads among the apparently
everlasting babybreath and withered leaves
nobody's bouquet so beautiful in the blue
glass vase on a grey morning yellow even
the fading yellow of one of them is bright
still and quivers a little bit in the wind
I have been hurt so much I hardly breathe.

7 August 2001

NAUFRAGE

What we find
has to be
what we were looking for

a hotel in Bloomsbury
a warm hand on a hot day

salt.

8 August 2001

Turn around and look the other way
the way I'm looking so I'll see you looking
and know we're looking
at the same departure

I am falling into you again
the probe the mattock poked inside

the place house hook hard jab

I am a scream let loose inside you
something hard that knows the way.

8 August 2001

He evaded his pursuers by
 concealing his face in the pages of a book.
His eyes were scattered type
 his skin was paper
and he was studying you from where he sat
 at midnight on the jetty
while you thought that you were reading him
 word by word he
reads along your hands your arms and finds
 a place inside your body where
you and he and all those words are ready to start.

8 August 2001

CARNETS

But something else, akin to waiting,
Aching, maybe, comme une virgule
Dans un texte you wrote or I wrote
A yearning built into language, a break
That satisfies and makes you want more

At once. Yes, you. Pausing to make
The words limp, go by so slow we touch them.
Always me and touching — what can it mean
That I was born with that deficiency, need it,
That a hand or a hide holds so much meaning?

Something else, maybe something wrong.
The wordless place that body is
And all its names are silly names, elbow,
Calf, small, nape, knee. Because
The body is the other side of speech

We read by writing, another kind of touch,
Little notebooks filled with flesh and blood,
A carnival in your pocket, a great
Solemn god sits on the lap. *For the dancer*
Says Mallarmé, *is not a girl*

She is something that happens to the light.

8 August 2001

Circumnavigating the globe in a hammock
You come to the strangest ports of call.

That's enough music. I want to talk to you.
It makes you ridiculous to make fun of your friends —

You choose them, the joke's on you. The glove
Goes back on now and I stroke your *nuque*

Pretending that I was speaking generally.
But I wasn't, except the way that all talk

Immediately pools out over the ocean
And comes to the limitless limit and goes on.

Just like a poem, one of those
That snatches out of tired imagery and narrative

Some statement about reality
It tries to get you to believe. Yes, you.

The other side of me, the one I want to know,
Touch, hurt, investigate, astonish, claim.

The only one in all the world that's mine.

9 August 2001
102°

Something coming
as a verb says to its noun
latin lesson
be irregular with me
semi-deponent
work on me for me

I have no self
but what you assign
or I am the sign
of your having passed
along a way

you move I rest
I am trying to say
a simple thing

things come to me
or stay away
my reach
being infinite
holds everything
and nothing

so it's all up to you.
All I ever do
is choose who you are
and you
do everything.
Cow. Honeybee. Wolf. Verb.

10 August 2001

THE INTEMPERATE

because a name
a sudden dwelling

names unfold out of one another

eventail adventure

as at Margate sands the tattered elephant

elle levante

she runs away from me into the rising tide
where I will find her

the surf belongs to me

or in the forest a bounding Fawn.

Expert, be naïve.

There is sand in your clepsydra, darling,
a sleek of oil along your practiced hip

from far away they come seeking new names.

2.

to repronounce your love same heart same hide
lopsided senses

everything I am is on your side

I want to listen to what I think and then do what you are

do the other can't I that you are
or how without a word
to do?

without a word to confuse me

since we both use it what word
I am you je me tutoye why not a word

like a phallus or a feeding tube a fading tv screen
lost image
things swallow when we're not looking.

10 August 2001

a port of approaches
Apaches we are violent
to begin with but then
Chartres and the telephone

and Proust almost able
to use both not far
from the middle of the world
I worry about childbirth all the time.

11 August 2001

STATION

As if there were cities
lapping — *clapotis* —

bees around me, gulls

and all these rivers were on the way somewhere

some same where

just one river

all one where

I smell the kindling of a flag

that burns the air

outrageous jingo sunshine

on the little lighthouse island

the train I wait for just one more wave.

11 August 2001, Rhinecliff

the poem keeps talking
talking to you

I find out who you are
by listening to what it says

I know nothing
nothing but what it knows

scanning the lagoon
for herons herons for you

11 August 2001
Amtrak

WEST VILLAGE

Safe at home
after the nativity
birth trauma city
ailanthus in rain

tall streets I covered
fifty years south
all crowds I see
the spectral premises

of bookshops bars
where I first knew
the other animal
all gone now

sullen jollity Jersey
tourists among my
screaming lights
all this is mine

but the streets
are the identity
of geometry
the structures of my

transactions linger
love changes hands
the church is bright
with money the door

is locked
against the poor
the cars are nervous
where I come from

moon my wedding ring.

11 August 2001

the place I love
the splendor
of the broken same

a sprawl
of difference in a garbage hand

11 August 2001