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sepD2001

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[Dream Text on the Feast of Holy Cross]

In the dream I'm reading Robert Bridges' *Testament of Beauty*. Just past its famous dedication ("To The King") I found a preface I don't think I'd find if awake. It all seems fustian until I come across a brief, almost parenthetical, description of a boy's foot in the dark of his socks: "the smile was white within the toes," and I feel happy, knowing that Bridges was a true poet after all.

14 September 2001

INFINITE

(as in fin night)

as is a stone

and what it tells me
Don't look at me let me think in thee

let me possess
the pathways of your consciousness and *see*

see for the first time
what actually may be

(a wind here
coming
all the way from the sun)

left here holds me
head of a wolf

of course I call you what I am

2.
reed bridges
over dry rivers

I tell you there's a green world inside the dust
just shake all the words out of your fine books and see
what loves are left

3.
what love leaves
behind
is just more of the same

(model monster. Maiden playing.)

14 September 2001

you tell me there are black circles at the center of my eyes and I tell you that's true and true for everyone, we all come from Africa you say and I agree, I look for savannahs in your eyes and sunset and such things and vast troupes of animals crossing the light on their way to what they drink, I am watching them in you and you in them, I realize I am a lion sort of animal watching these other animals, watching you, wanting to give you some choice, be lioness or prey, or both, I look up to you when I say that, you are taller than I am at the moment, you stand on higher ground, on grass, the grass is growing faster and faster, you stand so close to me I can almost taste your shirt

14 September 2001

SODALITE

late at night
a child's hand

pulling crayons from a box

what sex the child

what colors

it is blue but in the dark
it's smooth, tell me

what this stone tells

a bell below the lake
some story I have heard before,

a boat walking, a cloud in my pocket.

Be my god again
I who have wasted so many

This is remorse
It is calm
it feeds on differences

Kneel in the confessional side by side
and guess all the penances
impend. Litany
of memory.

Our Father which art.

Which color. Which child.
Right hand or left. Red not green.

In the penetralia of earth where red makes blue.
Child of opposites and the north wind

You draw my eye with a green circle
Around the slim yellow rim around the black.

How can you see through all those colors?
The child asks. I can't, I can't, I answer,
She has to tell me what they are,
and where to look.

I see a small blue stone
the size of Africa

people pray to it
but you put it in your pocket
and ask it how you feel

All the ways you know how to feel
and what good do any of them do?

14 September 2001

The joy of knowing
I know nothing

is a recipe
for this

a kind of bliss
afterimage of despair

a different color
before I sleep.

15 September 2001

TODDLERS

how long we child

weakness of infant Why

we should live
three hundred years
judging by
how slow we start

Six years before a human can walk steadily and fast
(one-twelfth our life)
whereas a horse who lives twenty years
can walk when it's born and win
the Derby when it's two

what is this recalcitrance about?
What strange employment fills those hollow years

do we need a dozen years
to learn to feel?

Did children ripen quicker once
and we're played out, a dying race
ready for the next Sentient Articulators to arrive?

15 September 2001

Note: After the catastrophe in New York, I had for the first time in my life the sense that the Sentient Articulator Race is close to us, will soon make its presence known or felt. Will speak. Maybe not clearly, but enough to go on. Never had this sense before, not even when I saw a flying saucer over the Delaware, or years later north of Boston. Those were just things seen, accidents or reconnaissance. This will be language.

Same sad small things

pelican;

 it is the science
of finding metaphors for things
and eating them,

 it is the art
of making love with minerals,

what you call chemicals and I call you.

delicate vibrations of the Other.

Music that runs the world

they say

 the streets of it,
such a neighborhood that was

lichen and canal and houses
dark-windowed, swallowing the light

please teach me this mathematics
it is the only language the heart can really hear.

15 September 2001

[Quarrels]

What is always wondering

— wandering?

Wondering, without getting there ...

— I wonder.

There are distances no closeness can resolve.

— Lenses?

Seeing solves nothing, don't be clever.

— I have no other weather, as you have neither.

Just to wonder this

— Now we're wandering from your point.

I wonder.

— What?

Did I have one or was it you?

— Never, a point is always pointing somewhere else.

I woke up angry, very angry with you.

— But you woke up, lots don't, that's what counts.

Who's counting?

16 September 2001

a painting done by tones of voice
the rug installer packs his gear
the power tools fit in molded cases
the floor is ready for my feet

now suppose I am your licit traffic.

16 September 2001

a little mist still leaving
last chance for the air

empowerment animals we
are pieced together from scraps of light

17 September 2001

Not to know if all the blue certainties
they thought me at school

are actual animals of their own, wake
when I sleep et cetera their own

footprint in the world as I believe
and not just isotopes of me

I pray. I want a stranger.

17 September 2001

Bill the plumber's radio plays PBS
calm morning voices bassy murmuring

not a word can I pick out
just the roil and rhythm of it

so this is English! this is my language
the great Colonial experiment

the greedy tongue that swallowed Greek and French
and still is hungry, and if it's so beautiful

(it is so beautiful) why can't I understand
what this plummy baritone is bothered by

that makes him speak (read aloud, probably)
non-stop while I write down what I can

— could he be dictating what I write?
What else is happening when I hear?

Does language play my ears and hands
so we're just soft old fashioned instruments

thinking a music we can't hear?

17 September 2001

EPITAPH FOR THE 1960s

Knowing where it's at
Was easier than knowing what it is.

17 September 2001

answering poetry
with claims
for stability

commit to me

17 September 2001

HOUDINI

I know that Milarepa walked below the leaf
It grew no bigger he grew no smaller
But it shielded him from hail and rain

I know the best of us walk through stone walls
Stroll on water, appear
In ten places at once and help in all of them

I know the most of us can do that too
In time with energy and learning to let go
And mind did make the world and mind

Can steadily remake it leaf by leaf
And tower by tower. But once made, the world
Just goes to sleep and runs on its own mass

If we forget to hold it clean in mind.
Mind reverses entropy of things. If we forget,
Samsara just rolls on and crushes millions more.

So Harry Houdini could take a punch in the gut
Without harm or flinching but had to be ready.
Some drunken frat boy slugged him unprepared

And it was curtains for the master. It wants
To say something simple in me now. Learn
From this disaster. Preparedness is awareness.

Step out of the burning building while you can.

18 September 2001

So much later I marvel it's still today
as if my mind hasn't blinked off and on
ten thousand times this same day
I am gathering what passes as my self
carefully out of the darkness and the trees.
The cool, the few dispirited katydids,
the night. Some of this must be me.
I have not forgotten how I started,
hungry kid in every window spotting
a new grail. I still am hungry, you still
are window, it shows you clearly,
moving slowly through your house,
talking on the telephone, slipping into bed.
I never learn. Maybe I know everything
already, and bodies are given to us
to despair. Maybe the night has something
new to tell, something strange, color
of old tobacco barns brown hair.

18 September 2001

“Why don’t we just jump into your Lada
And drive across Amerika? I don’t want
To hang out with wolves and bears, just
Witness the beauty of your body and weird
Intensity of your presence against
The backdrop of social and geographical
Occasions. I want to be with you
Everywhere. You are Vegas. You are Mormon
Suddenly in salt. Stoned in Seattle.
Compromised in a b&b in Weed.” He said.
And the wind spoke Russian too, and brought him
A shiver on the soft parts of his arms, a sound
That might have been a word, a small
Glass full of pale aventurine gooseberry jam.

19 September 2001

Knowing something

Else

Then you

Know me

It is simple

As that

Time we did.

19 September 2001

[TWO DREAMS]

1.

I learn that Raymond Queneau has just died at 94. I hurry to tell someone.

2.

I'm listening to a French song and hear a phrase that means "I've got to get born some more."

20 September 2001

Note: Dreams make nests the day has to live in, learn to fly away from.