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The beginning is wherever you begin,
wall journey or pilgrimage to sex
— bathroom to bedroom and back
again, seventy years — or the church
door that answers to *bronze*
the first word you hear that means
the same thing it says, sincerity
of tarnished metal, in secret
dreams you polish brass. Your tongue

can't translate this gleam any further.
Light. Not even with your fingers.
Shine. The sun does and you do your shoes.
No one ever makes it out of childhood whole.

1 November 2001

Organize more effectively
wing beats of the butterfly until
esperance itself looks over your fence
all smiles and green tomatoes for you
neighbor neighbor.

The thing is
you've got to organize reality.
give them names and make them stick,
live up to what you think.

Every
chipmunk is a challenge. we're all
animals, neighbor, you've got
to make them come to terms and stay.
As if language were a city they could visit,
like the place, settle in,
get on welfare, find a window of their own
from which they stare come morning
just like you out at the never ending
syntax of street and traffic lights and dogs.
Never. So far away your head reels
because the boulevards are so long
and you can't see where the city ends
and the natural takes over. Maybe there is
no other nature. Her brain
swarming in its hive beyond her face.
The hand you wave at her is a machine.

1 November 2001

SHELLAC

Writing with amber
a pretty big word
to soak deep
into the grain of wood

1 November 2001

Waiting
the opportune
the woman
you think she is
I wonder

shift the thinking
she is waiting
importune wonder
if you want so much

2 November 2001

AGAIN AND AGAIN FOR JOHN WIENERS

Examine the obvious
Heart line of a small pudgy Viennese
(trope)

 in the groove
of which or whom
the spores of Thomist logic

propagate ironic music still.
That's all we know
in tropic Boston
about the world,

 the healing
solemnity of our clichés,
caught things, trapped things.

Some day the city will give up and be the sea.

The reason we live such hopeless
fantasies: we only believe what we can see.

And evidence is nothing but cliché.

2.

Scared children dream release from syntax.
We die as old as we are young,

youth an incurable condition
you learn to live with
until you and everybody else forgets it's there.

2 November 2001

After all it gives you take
one thing more

a scar in the sky
tries to give light

crushed red flower jammed in the cracked rock
told me you were here

you were the gospel of entrances
I was a shadow that fell through your doors

There is nothing left of us but language
slowly settling to a resting state

clear water when the rain puddle
recovers from our insolent quick feet

playing through it what we thought was together.

2.
But we hurt each other's vocabularies.
Some words we can never use again

and those are fucked away, faded
wedding bouquets, sere syntaxes,

phony hieroglyphs. Conversation
with anybody is a minefield now

after you
after I did not let you lead me

away but did not let me stay.
The contradictions adhere to each assertion

like color to its substance —
you stole the red from my apple

and wet forgets to mean water anymore.

3 November 2001

word forgets its thing
the broom
fragrant with dust
dreams in the pantry

placard
 the news
is stored so no one
believes

 a voice
is what we doubt
always the changes
its fortune

and women's eyes.

3 November 2001

THE INTERRUPTIONS

Nothing to add to the birds.

At the feeder shading
by their flurry the
sun from my eyes

shielding.

Or just add sky.

Birds.

Consorts of fiddles as

the old man said
when he was young
a miracle
just another word

imagine a silence
takes itself seriously
an instrument
balanced in the hand

I wonder

Miriam, or The Interruptions

how can he replicate out loud
her hidden body

tune in next week

melodrama of desire

you Bible me so

sentimental
lost in the creek
the arrow of light

elm shadows fast

how can he analyze her chair

that's what he wants
and want is water

fluent with observing
masterless

her eyes look tired

a pilgrim mirror
questing the True Face

insert a color here
by which you signify
the secret practices of love

once he stops moving towards her
there is no end to observation

each difference a desire

that was the heart of the matter

only the urgent unobservant impulse
wins fair lady

laud

Martha means master
Mary means bitter

two sisters make one lady

each turns into other

the other other was his mother

Mary all attentive all observant
lost herself in love
the gaze of rapture
Martha all action and fulfillment
wipes her face on her apron
the master mastered by her own glance

her face lives in the cloth

I kiss her kiss

two people gazing at the same person
become the same person

this is gospel fact

this is a bird flying across the brow of the sun

end of part one

The grammar lesson

Please leave space here for sky

sky here

then light the birds

unwary fate
to cheat
each day

ehue a morning nailed to night

fence post

arrow pointing to the ground

sortie prochaine ↓

now write a hundred sentences beginning I want
then another hundred beginning I want you

deinde centum

another hundred I want you to...

how many of the last were in the latter
how many in the latter in the former

I say it I say it again

in this way write
your brief for the court of love

the law meant just for you

the doorless door

today is eight birds

uncountable the seeds of things

seed of the telephone

I lick you here and there

with speech that liberty

or do I presume

sun caught in a shapely piece of glass
Swedes shaped to fit the hand

a blue band of color writhes inside it
circuitous
pathway of the fleshy arrow
on its way to the sky
as if all these years I was intended

promesso

I am your husband
you throw me down

to throw it back

up there

where the light comes from

this is a play

where the light comes

as if I were born to throw it at the sky

a play with Jesus Miriam and me

muta persona

only the language speaks

and I the dumb one have all the lines

miracle! A play!

Didn't you realize it before now
all this poeming is just to feed
a mouth starved for language

lines on its way to speak
the occidental wisdom of the flesh

that it matters

which one I touch

whose shy hand brushes my shoulder as she goes

the touch of matter in a thoughtful world

the taste of manna

it's because of what he sees in her eyes

that he wants to hold her hips

isn't that strange

anybody's body just the shadow of the face

shade of her identity

I touch

all that anyone can feel

on this earth

shade? shape?

transparent in the mind

perfectly held

in mind

the light pours through her form

and he has been here before

close your eyes and be there evermore

same wisdom repeated becomes a bore

a bone?

hence Miriam and her scandal with the gardener

hence the other

other in her

short lines
haiku-haggling their way through love

Interpol wants her
for crossing the line
out

to live in a world without erasure

that would be terror

without measure
the unforgotten kisses on my morning lips

she throws me down the stairs

part dream

after this uncontrollable

falling

actual action
a man falling down a long flight of stairs
powerless to stop and trying
with what passes for instinct in such an etiolate character

learn to pronounce it
before I say it out loud

you did it

broken bones at the foot of the stairs

one long flight

she did it

exasperated by his passivity
she pushed him
out of her life
and out of his own

a pile of bones with sunlight on them
stained glass effects from a dusty transom

photoshop amend this corpse
dead among flyers from Thai take-outs

bones of the day

or not dead
the play will find out

unbearable
to endure
such endless workings out

the boredom of destiny
peripety perpetuity

plot lurches on

having enough words to get there

for all of our mouths

sequencing sunlight
in the staircase
shaft of light

motionless
dead in the dream

he's stalling now
waiting for space to answer
those famous nameless
birds of his

cocks of the trees

how pressed against her once

she with her back to the wood
impaled him on the sky

improbable ecstasies

foretell, the celebrated crucifixion

later, when the language learned to talk

birds

unreliable shadows even

wide and leery was the sea

there is no ocean in this play

raped by the rising sun
the sea's too busy in the morning

too busy to be

stretched wide against the arrogant machine

earthworks an island

he told you all the truth he had

the teller took it in her skilful hands
not enough, monsignor, not nearly enough
and she waited with her parted lips
and thought of some other place other wind
not this vault in her to which men brought
the practiced shadows of their inadequate desires

just tell me what you want

as if a naughty monk instructed a new age
Do what you actually desire

what could silence him like such permission

he might still be alive at the root of the stairs

part more

acts up

it is how we punish us for wanting
sometimes by taking sometimes not

twilight of the gods every afternoon

the interruptions

are all we have

to go on

the interruptions are the blessed
space

between this body and the next

the blessed bread she sets on the table

to meet a new person
call out a name

new names for old

the old name is broken and sticks in his throat

an apple bleeding from your bite

he has to know this
before the day begins

otherwise one more dream
dragged screaming
into the doctor's office of daylight

logoectomy
cutting out the meaning

doctor analyze the absence

he has to know
the day begins
without her

that is the story
yellowline this my students

nothing
with her shadow on it.

4 November 2001

Being able to give them everything I want

Their mouths being open

The leaves blowing in

5 November 2001

Rhaps ode

Strange feeding
fill the ink wiring eye
with mellow information

then they call you cool Or cul
the warmth down south
of the alphabet

blue pennies from a yellow heaven
conventionally pretty
high school haiku

teach them to shut up till It speaks.

5 November 2001

And now the wind is busy answering

and there is nothing more hypocritical than spontaneity
don't you know that

 don't you know
how hard the wind works
to bring you here
all these grains of its instructive dust

leaves of the trees that died for you alone?

5 November 2001

DEAD LEAVES

But that kind of death
goes back to time
and gets washed away

a thing is left
that presently turns green

Christ, it's just the oldest story

your face wet with making her come.

5 November 2001