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Is it in the fluid or in the knife
you oldest fountain pen to spill
such language on a wet clay world
when all we had to do is think in it

and there the information stands, green oil
from your groves in the year
when Hector was barking up the right tree
at last and we lost our bungalow by the beach
strange sails on the Bight of Benin

say all that with one syllable or two
because information fits inside the paltriest spore,
scrap, spiegelmann's broken mirror, anything
at all that breaks the light,

the terrible silence of the uninstructed,
those angels that have no messages to give.

1 December 2001

Start here get there
before the Yukon bears wake up
and stampede the meadowlarks with their roaring

everything is hungry still
it still is night for all this sunshine
night lasts all day long — we call it blue

we call it sky we call it color
the infamy of light
now this religion has no actual need of beasts

but cares them also
into its morning worryhouse the simple church
whose exit doors are hidden and the window

too full of light for you to get through
you are trapped in a universe of prayer
in this town we call god you.

1 December 2001

On account of Goethe's "Talisman"

Around the world belongs to God
Inside the world belongs to man
Inside the man belongs to God
Inside of God belongs to man.

1 December 2001

Twins
Bird and sky
Triplets
Bird and sky and sun

There is no number higher than three

Think about it a little
Stare into your hands, count your fingers,
Count as far as you can

Then understand.

1 December 2001

Suppose it really was the same
a European language before anybody came

it came from a mountain more than a mouth

The sky is a stone in our mouths we try to speak

I thought it was prairie it was perfume
a river churning through it beneath a bridge
from which a poet is busy leaping

busy dying

year after year
every day you see him falling as the cars go by on the way north

his legs and arms a star
cartwheeling

every day they find his body further downstream
someday he'll reach the ocean

teach the ocean
how to die

is that the one thing we know

it was a man walking under the water

in the old days men killed themselves for love

a different river
a different kind of ink it washes away.

2 December 2001

Barbarian to Adorno:

Suscipe me adorantem amorem
Making no clear sense in any language
So we are pure tongue again
And spit and animal
And so we mean
Again and so we sing
Parlando multo nihil obstat
A beast snarls its way at last to love.

2 December 2001

Can it sparkle. Can sea.

Peremptory vocabulary
A river in Italy I followed to the sea
Where everything retires

Cool Adriatic remember me

Please, nothing remembers itself in me today.
Just sun. Just none.

3 December 2001

KGB

The voice that filled the little room
I listened to and understood it was my own,
that I was speaking, right then,
my mouth was part of what was happening
and for a little while we
were all listening to what I said

and the room was red. Lenin's
picture over the bar, all our fathers
in the shadows, all our mothers
locked in this pretty waitress with pink hair
giving people this and that to drink

red milk of what we say.
Nothing makes sense till you say it to others
in the city, nothing is a word
until it speaks. Truth is another story,
truth is another
story. Those are the things I keep trying to get clear.

4 December 2001
New York

You enjoy the anxiety that rides horses through slime

The giant boots you wear
And your feet never shout

Silenced in the felt of everything that keeps happening

The voice of the closet lets you be quiet as a book
All night the pages of the book touch each other

On the brink of sleep a broken branch or a cat
Asleep by the closet door. God of Closets.

4 December 2001
New York

Eager to open architecture prism
he failed to notice she had not answered
his e-mail ever

situations alter
or situation is the altar
on which a new god is sacrificed every day

try to understand me, this is liturgy,
work of the people

not a letter written in Burmese.
You have to understand a little bit
to do, to do it, to do it right

with pigeons flooding over Father Demo Square
come back to the text, honeybuns,
come back and know

I am your only scholar, you,
doves or no doves.

He answers for her,
fails to identify his own voice,
footling truths among the timorous birds.

5 December 2001

I'm happier when I'm mad at you. Then the anger gives me something to hold between me and the unbearable tenderness I feel for you, the impossible sense of closeness that is all yearning and no having. When I'm mad at you I know what I have — a friend, an enemy, a colleague, a conversation, a quarrel, a fight. But no candle burning in the midnight chapel, no hot glass pain. Alright for you, whines the head child, go ahead, be distant. The whiny sad child in me accepts your distance, and mimics it himself for a while. Now we are twice as far away. But then the anger dies and the beauty and singularity of you comes back into view. And with it comes that mortal sadness about us, that there is no more.

5 December 2001

they say that every religion shows something of the truth

but what if the converse were the case
and the truth is exactly that which no religion shows or knows?

If you can talk about it, it is not the truth.

5 December 2001

the word that comes before you go
you can only learn
just after coming
home has many shapes
columns fleshes tastes
there are people in the world
think texture is an answer

6 December 2001

Ready to go.

Red E. Two go.
It is Delphi
again
we leave
the womb
of what we mean

travel
to the unmeant
actual
click of stones

what kind of road
brings who home?

Number me
for Christ's sake

luftbahn wolkenrad

being ready to go is really being
ready to come home

or is being ready to go really
being willing if necessary never come home?

Every clarity has a quarrel of its own.

6 December 2001

Kim, about your cheeks there is now
and has always been something Japanese.
I look at recent photos and see it again,
a crescent moon (technically decrescent)
is in the sky these nights, and the west
over Manhattan was full of the strangest blue
cloud light, as if the sun itself turned Japanese,
silvery, papery, kind without intention.
What I'm trying to do is just play chess
with Duchamp while simultaneously
explicating Lacan to a room full of
naked people or am I dreaming again?
Your cheeks are certainly true.
The knight's move goes from left hip
up to right breast. The rook runs up
and down the spine. Be kind
the way daylight does, on everybody's side.

6 December 2001
(Lufthansa Lounge, NY)

DEPARTURE LOUNGE

We're sitting here like marmots hibernating
Suspended animation dimwitted chamber music
German magazines everybody waiting to board

I am a kind of stone, you too are stone,
A kind of alabaster that knows how to pray.

6 December 2001
(Lufthansa Lounge, NY)

the new day begins at dark
can I be a sheaf of wheat?

3 k'anil begins
6 December 2001
(Lufthansa Lounge, NY)

Orpheus — was he a god
because he was first a poet and could sing
then ‘gave up his death’ to become immortal

[Cocteau in *Orphée*]

or was poetry only possible
because a god chose to do it

showed us how to do the thing
the way we learned to be human one
day when for the first time a god smiled?

6 December 2001