

7-2000

## julA2000

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That will be waiting  
like ink in a pen  
quiet own agenda own  
sense of weather

Things dry out light  
up again batteries  
lingerie a crow  
insists try  
to understand

Listen harder  
it's all that can be done  
put clothes on  
for other people.

1 July 2000

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Things dedicated  
fall  
    lawn serene  
remember dying

you not yet you

everything that you lose  
becomes you  
strong as they go

gone a drunken  
ferryboat  
long time crossing  
to where you began.

1 July 2000

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Morningolatry  
Morgan at her marriage  
sleek with unremembering

a trowel

piece this day  
together sandman

dream it to life  
bluespanked spilling sky

ever  
morningbreath breath.

1 July 2000

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*Argumentum ornithologicum, II*

*for Borges*

Dear goldfinch  
on my feeder  
so afraid,  
    don't you know  
I'm keeping watch  
for you?  
    You eat  
so nervously — looking  
anxiously this (eat)  
way (eat) that way.

But you're wise,  
you know I can't  
keep an eye on you  
all day and all night,

you're just a momentary  
interest of mine

whereas there must be someone  
whose eye is on you all the time.

1 July 2000

## BAD ARIA

Deer muck. Musk. Tracks  
or traces after gone  
game, the smell of evidence  
thick grass slept down smooth  
flat a sperm smell air fever

moving from infection to infection  
all that is to investigate  
is the transmission  
the tradition of being sick

whaler doldrum'd spun  
webs of spindrift on  
and all of them shake

ague finds the body  
well furnished theater  
for its improvisations.

1 July 2000

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No one ever for a moment  
would think this an actual  
statement someone is making  
from the bottom of his heart

to you. Hearts have no bottom.  
Sequences of glass thermometers  
valves opening and closing  
(Latin word for door, panes of a

door), an echo antiphoned  
from chamber to chamber till  
the original word (if ever  
there was one) is lost, lost

in the din of desire. Blood  
in other words, blood. If only  
you could let the words go  
free of origin, loosed from occasion

and follow them, really humbly,  
eyes fixed on their tails  
to watch where they go  
and how they get there,

you would know what you mean.  
You wouldn't know everything  
but you'd know everything  
the world knows how to know.

1 July 2000

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Writing  
is being told

thinking  
is listening

and being  
is thinking

about you.

1 July 2000



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## SPREEBRÜCKE

Call to the improper  
down by the canal  
the way they bend  
bridges over it  
how hard the traffic  
mornings in gulls  
speaking their piece  
of course the terror  
of a candle things  
like other things.

1 July 2000

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Be half, be dread,  
moon roof agape  
to give the stars a chance

to know your head  
beating down thereon  
the way Daniel's finger  
scribbled on the wall

for him to interpret  
all day long stars  
are over you you  
never see them they  
see you

    they plunge  
the Arabian daggers  
of their meanings  
into your head

        each one  
following the sulcus  
between your hemispheres

for stars like any  
absolute are fair  
even scrupulous

they pour in  
through the foramen  
with your first breath

and for hours after  
you think you're thinking.

1 July 2000

## THE MEANS

The last few days I've been writing with ink I made from coffee, using dark vinegar as mordant. It writes a lovely sepia reasonably permanent. I addressed experimentally an envelope to an imaginary woman and floated in in a bowl of water, rubbed it, let it dry and she still was there, her name, her little house perfectly clear. Serene at evening in a little town west of my in-laws and north of the Pope, named for a Roman god (the town, not the woman) of utterance and war.

2 July 2000

## LITERARY JOURNALISM

Celan may not be the only poet.  
But you'd never know it.

2 July 2000

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Where is blue when I need it  
color of memory and oblivion  
complementary bien sûr of daylight's yellow?

The sky is blue  
to remind us of the night  
where things come true

the dark we come from and we go.

2 July 2000

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Bring me back pens from Arabia  
steel nibs just slightly oblique  
and narrow, meant for inscribing  
an alphabet that is always flowing,  
rising and falling, waves of the sea,  
only ocean those deserts have.

2 July 2000

## SPHINXES

*La liseuse* the  
reading woman  
outstretched  
on a chaste bed

belly in contact  
with mattress  
bed-frame floor  
foundation  
topsoil bedrock  
earth's core

Everything that  
naturally is

and everything  
we've made  
together or apart  
now flows  
up into her  
she reads

2.  
she is abandoned  
to a world  
that speaks

her body focus  
a sheaf of words  
some actual mouth  
pronounced once  
onto the wheat field  
of the paper

3.  
sometimes reading  
is like kissing

sometimes lying  
down is like standing  
up running hard  
across the desert

to keep pace  
with the fixed stars  
so when her speed  
matches theirs she  
is suddenly still

lying there calmly  
stretched out at ease  
propped on her elbows  
studying a book

4.  
or just dreaming it.  
Why can't I see  
the words she's reading?  
Why can't I be  
her body, her eyes  
and everything they see,  
why can't I share  
this window out  
this window she is

she has spread  
a doorway out  
a door of light  
on the counterpane

what does she see  
when she looks down  
through the lines of type  
those dunes  
of other people's meanings  
that have to become hers



stretching before her,  
below her?  
What does she see  
while I'm watching?

5.  
Eventually she looks up  
her eyes half there half here —  
it takes a little while to be where you are.

Would she see me the way I really am,  
a man lost in the forest of a book  
she has to find, has to rescue

following the line of sight, his eyes  
following the contours of her body  
the contours of the world?

6.  
Better not look up.  
Two separate universes  
the beholder and the beheld  
sometimes for a moment  
the trembling of the veil  
they seem to be the same.  
She sees me seeing her,  
I see the place she investigates  
with all her heart and mind  
just by being there  
dreaming stories into a book.  
Where our lines of sight meet.  
For a second we are the same.

2 July 2000

## WHY EVERYTHING IS WRONG

I slept when I should have kept vigil,  
ate when I should have gone hungry,  
loved when I should have waited.  
Yet every single month the  
strange moon flaps its virgin wings.

2 July 2000

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This is the secret of the Tarot:

There is no empty card.  
No quality that does not  
in its own moment rule the world.

2 July 2000

## REMINISCENCES OF DUN LAOGHAIRE

Come tingling the machine  
flings — colors — up from the pool  
your holy member vibrates  
to belong to such society

we all have *some*  
inappropriate nuclear devices  
a lawn mower a postage stamp  
choose things easy to translate  
into Chinese the rabbit hurries

to enlist in the caverns of the earth  
the body mass of every species  
compute the slim remainder: the girl  
from the Canary Islands

but it is finally about all of us, the air  
breathing walkarounds, mouth

full of something to say, no matter  
how dumb, we have come.

3 July 2000

*A TRACK BEFOULED BY CATTLE*

(from Waugh, "Bella Fleace")

As if her eminence The Sphinx  
had made her way there, wetting  
at every step, pouring out the long  
closeted humors her gypsy desert  
would have none of, here she is  
puddling up the douce green hillock  
to rest at length on her tummy high  
above our seedy respectabilities  
bare-backed proud-elbowed gaze  
fixed on every man jack of us  
forever. What a sphinx does is read us.

She is the symbol of a mind bent  
forward on the wave-front of a book,  
a word floats in, lost in Ireland,  
found in Oregon, countries beige  
with vowel sounds, we begin and begin.  
Teach us to read water. To find  
the door between the tideline and the sea.

3 July 2000

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Lightning bugs we called them  
not fireflies. There's one  
now on the porch screen  
emitting green phosphor  
in good measure. Things  
light up when they see us.  
Everything is a dog. Most  
of them are innocent, the decent  
wolf mind not all bred out,  
stones, shells, ores, appetites.  
They dance affinities  
till the end of time. These all  
try to take the tango we  
learned from them, things,  
back into the Grail spaces,  
spiritual places, losses, sudden  
blazes of remembering you.

3 July 2000