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julE2000

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Let everything remind you of somebody else
let a wolf be a bear he a moon
sunk in a marsh be the bones of a boat
your mother sailed with the man she should have

then you would be ordinary poetry. Now you are god,
a solo shot in mindspace, a killer whale
gown compassionate with youth. Truth. So beautiful
you are you have no need to kill.

Conditioned reflexes in your onlookers compel
them to the death swoon of the Amorist
and your work is done. Now go play
with epics and operas, your great mural

“The Growth of Mind from Mud to Me”
in the Radiology-Oncology waiting room
has brought uneasy solace to more than a few
while they twiddle candy wrappers and dread the news.

24 July 2000

(but Petra why are you so sad?
what Saxon sorrow understand you
better than the joyful things you do?
I have seen you in Leipzig standing
appalled before old master paintings
in shock that there's such evil in the world,
across the street the Stasi archives
bred terror in the mild spring morning,
blue and yellow flowers on the Sachsenplatz,
is that why you're so sad,
your eyes know the world is pain
and nothing lasts, not even pain?
You are too smart to be happy.)

24 July 2000

When sun forgets the dappled lawn
the shadow too relaxes

everything held in the same calm eye,
a glance, not a gaze.
A girl, not a missionary.

25 July 2000

Take aim at everything.
Cut the bullshit, we know
what bodies like.
Soul's nutrition starts in meat.

25 July 2000

MAP

Push deeper into the interior
back roads in night time
narrow passages to nowhere —

and there you'll find it.
The thing you chose to be an exile for,
you immigrant to flesh,

a well in the dark and someone
sitting beside it talking.
Maybe talking to you.

25 July 2000

THE DEPLETION

Uncertain telegram
from a century ago
when new still was fangled
in wires and cables and stuff

when information meant
a change of state in matter

and men dipped iron pens in gall
to write hard numbers.

No wonder *Yellow Book* and soft
prevarications of the sodomites,

take a brass typewriter
for a ride in Rye,
bicycles and fountain pens
the world is coming close,
teletype and submarine,
we're almost here,

information is a change
of state in matter

forever and forever something counts.

25 July 2000

Now what? Caught by sub-stition
(or whatever is the opposite of superstition)
we remain victims of public holidays,

of Sabbaths: that mechanical imposition
of number on experience, a chain of days
modulo 7 instead of the eternal wave —

So what should we tell the Queen of the Sabbath
when she saunters in at sunset and comes to our arms
all silk and sweat and remembering?

Welcome inside me. Make every
day Shabbas, make every word a prayer.

25 July 2000

A venture to tell you
all about me again the fault
is mine dear brute
the stars leave us alone

or they are mirrors of our former lives
glimmer hard to read in this one
feeble everlasting witnesses of what?

Who I was I am will be until
I read their traces with the blue
eraser, mind, mind itself
beyond the paradigms of lust.

I would not trust me. I read
as fast as I can but there is history
spooling out of me all the time,
endless as the chambers and salons
of Schönbrunn lead in and out of each other
a palace in perpetuity
a never ending house

and the best room in it is you.
No matter how we suffer
that I can never enter now,
the door's too high for me,
I crouch at the rear entrance way,
I lick the doorknob, kiss the swelling
threshold but can't go in.

You were my chance and I lost the key.
I thought there would always be leaves on the tree
but I am a winter man and best with no.

26 July 2000

Cool sweet morning on my own planet
homecoming happy after the hollow night

where was I? Every morning reall
feels like this, only today is cool
and fresh enough to delight me into the calm
of notice, so that I know the hour,

so that I know I'm home.
But where does the sleeper hang out
such that waking is like coming home?
You'd think us exiles would find our ease
deep in the structures of the night
where the sunlight of his far away first place
could rise on him.

Maybe we came from nowhere
and everywhere is home.

26 July 2000

OF COURSE IT IS AN ISLAND

1.

Some will accuse the Procurator
Offending pious sensibilities

As long as the man dies
It is a holy city tambourine

Beating in the dark after Sabbath's out
And lewd dancers cast chaste shadows

Frightened men by firelight
But the women do not fear, they have been here

Before, they know their sons are born to die
But men are always taken by surprise

Shaken by the sense of what has come
At last, the rope, rack,

Rictus on the cross, a word or two
And shut the door.

2.

The difference here is that he walks
Has some business still to do

Mysterious luminous friends
—Are they friends? — who roll the stone off

The necessary hole.
The woman finds him first

If there were a lake nearby they would go
Explaining it all to her in the boat

Drifting contentedly through the dawn mist.
But there is no lake, a trickle

Of iron water down the gulley
Some spurge and thistles growing by it

They go up to the high road and walk
Away from the city

You can see
Light between them as they go.

3.
Everything I've told you in in code.
Rivulets of blood, a dead crow

Nailed post mortem to a barn door,
Why did the bird die? What is the name

Of the woman with blue kerchief
The old man with a map in his hands

The town where they play pétanque under olive trees
As if everything belonged to everyone?

Silvery steel balls hunk hard on each other
Creeping up to the burnished wooden jack ball

Like a band of oafs surrounding a preacher
Prophet healer of lepers and blindmen

A dangerous mouth on him
Who speaks a language the dead understand

Maybe better than the living.

26 July 2000

Dim invaders, specialized accountants
Bluejays hollering in Jamaica Plain, abaft, athwart,
Words that sound good when you say them
Even better if you don't know exactly what they mean
In the Name of the Compassionate — who knows a name!
Who can ever tell what Mary means, or James?

Scattered through the thunder the hope of rain. Lightning, I am thine
You godly girl having so much fun upstairs,
I dance to your dramaphone
I hear your backside hammer on the mattress
I hear you come and then the lightning goes,

O weather is a godly beast a cream of opposites a gleam.

27 July 2000

Cause for celebration. Coffee,
check-out lane empty,
a friendly dreamer at the register.
Weekend summer. Whole cloth
flag surf sand wake up already
the ordinary where you are
all the time anyhow is good
is very good. The different is dangerous,
the oddity of other, hot glamour of go.
Eo, it says in *Lain*, I go, *i*, go!
is you go, *it* she goes
and then we're gone.

No wonder I'm frightened. The scale
of values is itself imported
from the same dream the check-out's having.
Sometimes when you turn a wrist
the whole cosmos changes course,
axis trembles, birds fall
and catch themselves just before the grass,
remember sky and they're in it.
Just remember me and you'll be with me
world without end amen.

28 July 2000

Alert to the necessities
My mind wants company

Only because I think it's mine
Or that I need

Some personal resurrection
Whereas the mind is such

And I am only its occasion
To make do with me

I am only a foreigner
language is the moan of exiles in their sleep.

29 July 2000

what will we sound like when we wake,
when the names are sleeping instead of us
and we actually speak?

29 July 2000

Catch it at this last a glad
mixture as an arm
lifted over the horizon rain
into the green world

all I need to do is need

and narrow, slim a project
to its deliberate peak,
pin, point of the story and
the last gleam's gone

and now I see it
the namelessly perfect identity.

29 July 2000

That one goes to a far place
And someone is there
Who is the same one you think
Waiting for you there

The face you are trying not to see
Looks out at you from everything
From dozens of faces especially
All of them serene and distinctly

Not interested in you
And you cant stop looking at them
Because you don't want them to be
What they also clearly aren't

The first face that got this started
And their absence of interest
Ought to be a relief is a burden
A sign of one's own failure

To be someone other than you are
Namely someone who is traveling
Towards or away from someone
Whereas going should be for its own sake

And you should never leave home.

29 July 2000
at JFK

(which actually is the neighborhood from which I come, strange to think now)

OPOWIESCI

A word you look at shares the solidity of print and paper with many words you know. But this word now seen shares none of the sense of meaning something that you get from the words you usually see. Black is still black, sans serif typeface is still vivid, explicit. But the thing you usually look for, or endure, in words is missing. You're not sure whether you miss it or not. You look at the present word. You're not a word at all, you think. What are you? What are you trying to tell me?

29 July 2000

Later, in Brussels, I asked the woman who was reading the book, *Opowiesci Eny Lamy*, what the word meant. She said: stories, stories people try to tell. So the word was pretty good at throwing some of its meaning across the aisle to me.

To know after all you are the thing you wanted to be
a forest of legitimate exceptions, a kind of Schubert
with bigger ideas yet, to build a tune out of some stone

out of rubble and shadows, that's enough,
such that heaven itself succumbs to this higher mathematics
this smile in the heart of number

To know that most of what you had to do is done
and you still want more
and you are still only at the beginning.

30 July 2000
Hannover

IN THE GEORGENGARTEN

In the beautiful park of such straight lines
alley in shade soft-footed by leaf-fall
alley in sun alley paved for skates and such
I can consort with ducks near the monopteros

just like Munich's but nearer, lower,
a gentle knoll, no view except the park itself,
the little pond, aforesaid ducks, brown
and white, some coots at the narrow end

of course I found a feather
let this
be my truce with heaven
and you too.

30 July 2000
Hannover

o God such trees
as if there never was a war

and fish rise to take
small invisible midges

till suddenly it's evening
and I hear a crowd voices

of God knows who
gather beyond the trees

30 July 2000

Hannover

(listening to the concert crowd filling up the Herrenhäuser Gärten beyond the trees)