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TRAIN TO BERLIN

Across flat land
a flat sky spread
shifting clouds
fast heaped horizon

soup bowl sky the humid earth
a poor man's dinner

only memory needs this
and who needs memory
to tell me

*once you were poor
and now you forget*

the train is warm

a pretty mother with adolescent sons
a lot of posing and bonding
then I notice the boy beside her has lost his leg

a wheelchair stowed in second class

and rain clouds there now where we have come
pine trees continuous a while
grey path through the woods

what does the map say
or is it raining?

Alphabet of weather

Song? It's what a substance makes,
the tones it gives off

archeology of sound.

Flat as a playing card
the trees are pips
Ace of Linden
the Ten of Beech

an ugly corrugated fence
kilometer of it
hiding what?
and revealing interesting graffiti surface mode of South Bronx

playing cards.
Play with me

Each kind of tree a suit
in a deck inside another deck
 where one suit of headed by the Ace of Trees
 and that deck is folded in another

canalboat going east

Wolfsburg autostadt VW logo and nothing more.

Ace of Cars inside the suit of Vehicles
 inside the suit of Things that Move
 inside the suit of Things
inside the High Suit of the Visible

we count modulo 10 all the kinds of entities or noumena there are

and this is the game we play
How many suits are there really in the world?

Fire Water Earth Air

hayfield among the forests lost

the train knows where you are
runs right through your placid flank
on its way to Delhi. Delphi.
Your way leads right here

The slow centripety
of being somewhere
always, anywhere at all.

always

a little canal, looks like the eel
that lives in it,
 old eel, old savvy
 of the northern earth,
to hide from sun and hide from shadow

eel wisdom, eel traveler, the cunning elvers
by compassion driven
 to find their breeding ground
Sargasso and forever,

 little canal run north and south
right angles to the great western barge canal —

a woman in a pale blue dress goes by
looks like the sky we all live in

an idea straight as a canal
blue as money
reaching east (west)

with love for lagniappe and a pole star drives us

or a canal dressed up here like a river

most wonderful wife
like a high coast in New England
sea speaking on rocks
morning after a significant storm

one carries one's child along
until it walks
and ever after you wonder
where that weight
went that kept you
busy with the gravity of earth

something's missing
you always think, your
arms are always empty
empty of someone whose whole weight
whole life
and entity and song and prose
once pressed you down

the land still flat but there's a lift to it now
a provisional sense of a field here and there
slightly slightly heaves itself up

and the air is clear here while a kilometer away north
the just a little lower lying fields can float in mist

old roofs old church tower little tiny town
full of beautiful girls and seven year old poets and I'll never know

how kind the Germans are to say Aussen for foreign —
not 'alien' or 'strange' or *étranger* —
just outside, outsiders,
the outlanders with their outlandish but endearing ways,
but our foreign once was *forane*, 'outside the gates'

and no one ever
is outside his fate

the train shuffles fast through the old earth
Lombardy poplars sentinel industrial estates

Grey and beautiful and flat such land
Constable with no cows

and no sooner do I think that when a field
full of Holsteins rushes past
the herd mostly lying down, white and black on green
settled in their patches of dry grass
foretelling rain

and I will never know if this rain fell.

Distinguish: pond from lake. *Teich und See.*

The next herd of cows is standing, debout by their fence

and the southern air is misty now,

the way we dance to please each other.
We put ourselves out to bring you in.

Riddle: the Implication of the Dance,
Nataraja?

Dorje Phagmo, uttermost Queen
we always see (are most fortunate to see)
midway in Her dance, right leg lifted, crook'd,
her hand fierce with curved knife chopping down

(old town, horse farm, the world
is always the same)

same the love

for every loved, same
attachment, cut
and the world is red, red as She is
cut the cord that loves this thing and that,
love nothing but the middle
because every moment is the middle of Her dance

middle of Her name
we move

we move in mind
(keep still)

to speak.

Beyond the forests of punctuation a single red word.

OK? The pomposity of poetry is a lovely thing,
The lordly huff and puff to please the Queen

and Sun comes out on Brandenburg
I guess again, and guess again

narrow houses, narrow red roofs tiled above the sandy plain.

3 August 2000
Deutsche Bahn, Hannover to Berlin/Ost

A walnut carved from amber

found in the grave of a lady
a little north of Rome

a walnut a little open
its pale meat the yellow
its shell the dark of amber

something someone made
of what was never made

something seen
inside something seen

look at this
until you see the lady

the mysterious craftsman
the mysterious skill

the fantastically mysterious motivation
of such simplicity

something, something else.

3 August 2000
Berlin

having examined Assyria

statues reliefs the steles
thick bodied tons of them
at the Pergamon museum
I am laundered of what I
supposed myself to know

what I used to think

think about all that

I don't understand a stone
let alone a floor groaning under basalt
let alone a man with a beard and wings
let alone the body of a bull with words all over him

it is clear to me I understand
nothing of what those people intended
if they intended anything

if they were people

We know from our experience that massiveness
is connected with opulence and insecurity —
Mayan excess, Nazi bankruptcy, Stalinist greed,

But this Assyrian stuff is not like that,
it's witty, maybe even wise,
a two-ton epigram squatting under immense walls

maybe. I don't know a thing about it
and that's what I know
so I know I know less that when I walked up
through the imposing forecourt,

know nothing.

Yet this nothing feels curiously refreshingly
light, I'm free of something I didn't know was a burden,

now I don't have to believe all the crap they claim to have deciphered,
inventories and slaughter lists.

That's not what's here.

Stone talked to stone,
that's all. We hear them in our sleep.

3 August 2000
Berlin

To be a man alone in this city
Puts one at an advantage

I feel as if I'm skating around and through couples
— makes me feel quick and nimble.

Couples lumber. Even the young ones
Being slowly happy. Deft

Singularity of going there on two feet.

3 August 2000
Berlin

In restaurants
Food eventually comes.
Strange if it did not.
Like Pessoa on the sea wall
(I'm making this up, not quoting)
waiting for the waves to come in.
But all the waves decide to go out,

that day all the waves went out.

One sits around and the place waits with you.
There, this is called ordinary.
And why not?

3 August 2000
Berlin/Hackescher Markt

distinctions make selves
don't involve
me does it

 a matter
of architecture
where every brick has
to go somewhere
improvisation dries
up after a while and the
building stands

alone.

 everything
may have to be
somewhere but I can

be nowhere I choose.

3 August 2000
Berlin

huge pale blue sky over Friedrichshain
across the railroad yards where
last night at last light the whole
sky of the city came to us walking there
north on Warschauerstraße
us Turks and foreigners to strut
into darkness linked by the inscrutable
designs of our otherness
our wantonness our outlandish desires
what can the people do with us
working neighborhood long trolley
frequented avenue like the Brooklyn
I remember only in the long dreams

The dreamer inside never changes
he comes with me wherever I move
he is the working class in my city
the one, the ones who move to mean

he is the one who makes me do

and come and go, weary after all day walking
up the neighborhoods of the great city
to the summit, the narrow place
where I lie down, the street
named for Copernicus, off the avenue
named for Warsaw. Men and women
are drinking wine at midnight
so I must be home. This
is where the dream begins.

4 August 2000
Berlin/Friedrichshain

The large bombast of personal identity
Identifies me in the orchestra
I am unlikely to be overlooked
But who can see a sound?

We are all singing constantly,
It is just a polite fiction to speak of silence
Only no one is heard
There's so much music

Music that speaks and never listens
Speaks and never tells my own
Groan pervades the living room
And blends with everybody else's.

4 August 2000
Berlin

BREAKFAST MUSIC

1.

Economy of food.
The act of desire
Reduced to its minimum

This simple thing
That bonnebouche
Into *this* mouth
Introduce

With darkness
To follow
And sounds offstage

Where what was there
Is in here
And everything that was
Itself is now just me.

2.

Women of Berlin
Are so different from the men.
Their men?
They seem separate
Races, and then a third,
The Hard Marrieds
Who seem to fit
Into each other with
Practiced contempt.

3.

But what do I know?
A sail in the sky
Brought this ship here
And I too am on board,

I can't get off yet
Not here,
I'm with all the others
And all their forevers
Are mine too.

And who can tell passengers from crew?

4 August 2000
Berlin

PROFILE

Concern with others
The whole face an arrow
Of compassion

these interesting
middle-aged women
I see in Germany
who have so hyper-focused
attention on
the object of compassion

—too linked with its object
too much in contact
with its own feelings

the reverberating

but the beauty of their faces
as they bend to their care
child or cause or kindness

mother of the world.

4 August 2000
Berlin

After breakfast I walk up Copernicus Street
Straight into the rising sun
The whole fierce sun
Coming right up out of Russia

Ostig, ostig, easty, easty,
All those fashions
Of what comes to us roughly packaged as the light.

4 August 2000

CREED

I believe in the moon
That she is close
And shows me what I need

And in the sun
That it is fierce
And sometimes good
And always hot

And in the stars
That they are far
And far.

4 August 2000
Berlin

moving a room mowing a *Raum*

meow Möwen over moorland mewing

a man's need for *Ruhm* I deem a rood

needing a doom but don't know whom.

5 August 2000
Berlin

SCHÖNEBERG

Morning is need. A bead to bate on
Prayer unit an again of breath

Break a fruit to eat it say a word
Beyond the furious car bombs someone

Light's pilgrimage to find a taker
Pictures fierce and common saw to it

A mountain range at sunrise chlorine
Ring of insulted particulars

The outage of being
Rank on rank in heaven's gay bars

Twisted to the tween, throughsexed
In devious limit smitten with detail.

5 August 2000
Berlin