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Blue heron on top of red car Amsterdam
Super Pollen bhang Jordaan canal old couple
waiting for the ballet to start postcard

but they came home safe on ordinary space
in hallowed shade of ordinary time
easy easy with no-spin no-churchbells sleep

not spasmed by the twitch of naming things.

23 September 2000
Boston

The heart has its velvet way of hurting
across the floor from whom I shook

shuddered maybe with the single urge
to lick the deep sluice till the ocean came

to wake me with the animals of speech
to be Netherlands! To be part of geography

till the polar icecap melts and drowns us all.
Once I was a farmer and lied to wheat

a herdsman who made love to wolves.
I found ways of hurt the heart didn't know.

23 September 2000

Seems stuck. A cool or grey
This rainy day by Charlie
Christian or the first stanza of bhang
1951 the other Charlie I fell asleep
and have been asleep since then.

My drugstore heart, my learned
Bullshit, my dispensary. All right
I made the title up, don't wear
Your ears out looking. I am asleep
And now am officially old,

A tiny number, thousands of years.
Sore knee, sore eyebrow, mouth
Full of crumbs. Soft palate
Is no match for toast crust insult.
Cough. I dream I am a panther

Spotted in a wood of girls,
A priest of poses, smell this flower
Against death's clever infection,
Miasma we do not have to breathe.
Flatter me with garnets, iron wolf.

If I die, you can be sure I died for you.

24 September 2000

slim as a magic childhood
a western city here in my hands
I must have taken once
when they thought I was sleeping

I think of you I always do
I tie a knot in every string
on Bacon's walking stick the sun
whirls in a pewter sky

everything returns to us
I wanted you too much and gave
too little like any man in love
mostly with the provocation

every cough a hymn tune every
touch a sacrament a paradigm
of pure prowl, rodeo values
love wrestled her to earth until

she thought I was the gasp she meant.

24 September 2000

Keeping up with the bones
I was a lady in another life
A dog in this one once
I bit the hand caressed me

O cosset me with theology
For I am sick of being a man
And doing so poor a job at it,
Show me a good shoe

Something in seraph-skin, a bald
Eagle feather cape, a belt
Formed of a living snake
A hat that's one big shell

One that will drown me deep
In the automatic music of the sea.

25 September 2000

And something else is waiting for you there,
A brood of crabapples sullen in the sun
For everything that is small and sour sweet
Hits the margin in this late kultura Kaiser-yellow

This blue utopia of the western skies
MegalAmeriMania, ailment of athletes
And aesthetes, ascetic excess —
The network cameras want to humble us.

You want to be asperity and rich and mean
And keep your triumphs to yourself
And ditto your catastrophes. You will take
Off this shirt only to meet the loveliest chance

And that one alone will know if your wear
Silk or horsehair under there
Or just your own old lovely boring skin
Beneath the cotton flag of everyday.

Intimate with yourself, you score
In the never ending soul's Olympiad.

25 September 2000

RAIN

The glass road
To a door
I will never enter

Except maybe some
Day in this
Dream called living.

26 September 2000

DANGER

And where two roads converge
dark trees were planted
long ago to hide a well

it is a special water, you kneel
to lap it gently, it feels
like breathing, like speaking

a spell out loud at last
some fairy whispered in your ear
when you were little

and all these years it waited
inside you till you found
the road the trees the well

and drank, then finally could tell.

26 September 2000
a poem of the rose+cross

BOSTON: VAN GOGH PORTRAITS

So many were waiting
we decided to wait
so many were looking
we felt obliged to see —

a man spent four years
painting his world
in sunshine and in rain
until he saw God's face

beaming at him from
the mailman's face, and old
people looked out
of the cradle, he saw

the poverty of time
to mean or teach or tell
what only outlaw light,
the colors, ever could

so he found the colors
where fear and hunger hid them —
now everything was a face
and everything shone

and then he did a Viking thing
broke his chest open
to let every color in
so the light could come home.

26 September 2000

I am old the trees breathe for me
One last time I need to tell a joke
A simple Schubert kind of kiss
Like my father at the bar and a horse came in
And where are we then, Quien-no-sabe?
Like the yellow fizz of Trommer's, last
Beer garden on the terminal moraine
This seems to be about sumac growing
Profligate animal all over New Lots
The hindquarters of pale Russia steppe
A faubourg an hour's walk from my dog
Where the net of nickel travel ended.
But I reminisce. The only interesting agenda
Is what is beyond accomplishment by any,
You prepare for it your whole life long
Like a music teacher tuning a violin
For a pupil who never shows up.
Saturday and the beginning of amber
In fact it's all moraine and outwash plain
Glacier garbage on which eternity gets piled
Your pays your rent and takes your choice.
Chance. I drink to you again, parkland
Of your intimate savannahs, I still care.
Otherwise grow up and live in Manhattan
Where the Martian subways strive all night.

27 September 2000

The cold necessities of the system
Prison us. A pawn in a palm.
A conspiracy.

That's enough
To get oil with,
A dug connection
Between the surface and your liver
Where according to my sources
The lips of love purse open to take in

That curious word that curious
Speaking that is always hearing.

27 September 2000

THE ROLE OF GOD IS PLAYED BY YOU AND ME

I am a man in a movie with a white shirt
in a big clean loft
I am a man with big windows with a lot of light
but I'm in shadow near the middle of the room
a big clean loft with big bed and a lot of bookcases
but I stopped reading a long time ago
the window tells me enough stories
and the skin on my thighs is full of philosophies

I'm a man in a movie I'm in control
For ninety three minutes I'm God Almighty
With a gypsy accent, with a clean white tee shirt
With a lean green lizard scurrying across the room
From its terrarium to my shoulder
It joins me it becomes part of my skin
All animals devolve into me
And I devolve into them this is the great process of the world
God trotting along behind you leaping up and biting your haunch

We are all animals running across a clean floor
Towards a patch or fleck of sunlight we think we can eat

We tear at everything with our tearers teeth of our mind our tongues
Lapping up the milk of sunlight the blood of guesswork the sweat of talk

I am God and I think I made this lizard this body
But I'm too busy playing the harpsichord now to be bothered with history
Right now it's all Scarlatti or something
Two keyboards with octave doublers with gilt lettering over the keyboard
Telling who made this machine this music
It must be me
Every name must be mine must be me

And then the foolish lizard swallows the sun
And it is silent in heaven for half an hour
The harpsichord makes a choking sound and stands still
We call this choking music
We call this silence the meaning of what we experience

I experience nothing
I am God I make experience for other people
I see everything and feel nothing

I make you feel
I say this feeling that I make you do,
I say that feeling is the secret lawbook of the world,

Obey the music of it,
feeling,
I make only commandment, feel,

Obey this sound.
And everything does! The sun
runs away from the lizard, the lizard
curls up on my skin like a sickle,
a green shadow,
an absent moon.

Later we will reap this light together,
and gather the ripe kernels of the dark,
you and I, I let you work with me,
I let you under my skin,
we work together,
I let the door fall open, I let someone come in
We've all been waiting for

I let her take off her blue sky
I let her take the lizard off my skin

I let her take the sun out of her eyes
I let her take the dark out of her lap

I let her be nothing
and she lets me be nothing, nothing at last, at last

and the little lizard scurries up her leg.

28 September 2000

BY THE POOL AT BETHESDA

Entering right, appal the edges they kept trim to make her feet not know. I am is a name of someone, a name is a transgression, it is what you do to my head when a tree can't stop thinking your face. The permanent shadow you carry as your skin, as if to protect someone outside from the intensity of light in there where the grass is never mown and the milk understands copper. Chemistry was the first name for the touch of wonder, what happens when one sees.

Only ever angel sees.

So much I wanted her to see. I wanted to open the forest of my chest, tear down my trees and thorn-pricked shrubberies and let her in, so she and she alone would come at the end of time to drink from my white marble fountain, the one with the rusty wrought iron gates around it tricked with griffins and wyverns and gilded lance-heads, so what, the fountain that spills ever and ever my whitest simplest water. *What I mean is just for you* it says in old letters over the locked gate, but round the stone coping of the well is written *When you drink I live forever.*

... 29 IX 2000

I would pick it up and write with it, a color
Like a man and a woman standing on a dock
All alone by an unvisited lagoon
Enduring each other's silence as a caress
A fine hot thing like the sunset in their squinted eyes
Insistent on still seeing the gold-shent water,
Wanting to see everything no matter how it burns.

On this little wooden jetty a boat could rub
Chuffing in and out on the meager tide, and they
Could sit down in it and face each other, his back
To her future, arms easy on the old wooden oars.
And she would see. I want to write down with a crayon
Exactly that color, scrawl a single thick word
And slip it under your door and wait for a miracle
The one called tomorrow morning and I forget.

29 September 2000

I call it mummery
you call it maiden
I call it bell
you say it *bronze*

and it listens to you, it all
listens to you, clockwork
and carnation, the Nile
snaking towards the sea.

You are the rain in my lap
the news in my bones,
the quiver where God stores
evidences of his existence

before she shoots them into me.

30 September 2000

UNTIL WE HAVE SOME ROOM TO BREATHE

After image a bowl of rice
No one eats this kind any more
We have herring we have dace
The rivers are full of gold
Like the veins of Lydia
When the sea was young

Yes but can you play it on the lute
On the guitar? Isn't a street
Just a rigid possibility against
Sideways music where we actually touch?
To thaw a city! To reticulate anew
In darling lovenests these public spaces!

I am always looking for a veil to lift
Because the body is always wiser than the soul.

30 September 2000

THE BLUE

1.

The blues, the blues are trees

the somber zeroes of old Europe
fondle the tender ears of
girls catch catfish

I am bewildered with lagoon

2.

Primitive language, is there a way
a color once seen
can be flensed from the object it inscribed

so that the object stands
naked as a possum's tail

and void of memory?

Color is a memory, little boy.

3.

And then the Prophet stumbled down from the Blue Mountains, gazed at his onlookers a while and spoke to them, sounding sour, yet with a sweet look in his eye that lured some and scared others:

Places are stones ye throw at one another.

Woe to the arts administrators

when the spirit's winter comes
and each be required to recite

how many new found lands
he subvented or subverted,
how many lyre strings he strung or sliced
and how much of God's money he disbursed
on the glib bullshit of looks-like art

Better be Herod in those days
or with naughty Babylon
than walk to work among the sunny
gingko trees of Murray Hill
with the Lord's judgment hanging over you,

it went easier with Sodom
than it will with your Foundations
who waste their angel cake
on cautious has-been arrivistes

standing around with glasses in their hands
like a bunch of pronouns with no verbs.

4.

So send the tree a telegram:
Forgive me, I'm old fashioned as a wolf
Alive on sufferance,

Drenched
From the spavined gondolas

I keep a burning flashlight snug inside my clothes.

30 September 2000