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That all
I could want of be
she is

how stretches
to take
me everything in.

20 November 2000

The engine running but the car not glad to go
idling is a custom of the mind before the Muses
austerely slut the openings and all sky breaks loose
incarnations of tumultuous precision (art)

tracing just the shadows of their lithest movements
which are always (cave after cave) the movements of the mind
in the mind like ice in centuries the glacier man
we saw sleeping in Bolzano stretched on the left side

or did the axis shift again and Mussolini's triumph arch
welcome the Saxons it was built to spurn from where the south
speaks Latin and is pure and here the Muses wander
naked chastely in the decent pine woods because blood

takes on a different taste in Germanies the schist the oak
marvels of recidivist theology until the God
is born again in waste and word and wood and bell
the ceremony of inspiration drips with oil and wax and ink.

20 November 2000

As able as we often
And then the truth of Whom
Begets us again

And we are born
In the woe of a barn
And our mother a girl

Our father a wish
And what kind of hands
Did he have

To carve a boat
From balsa wood
To open an envelope

Gently with a fingertip
Seemingly without
The least curiosity

To find what anyone
Might have written
Or might be inside.

20 November 2000

On the way back from somewhere
I happened to look up there
Where I thought the pine trees are stored
Then what I saw

Straight above my head was Pleiades
The maidens who rule the sky's far mind
And take our thoughts away and give
Them back changed

These are the stars Tibetans call the Six
Thieves because they cure us of
Anything that is only our own and
Make it everyone's

The way the Muses who are various
Bright colored and nimble both in hip
And wit can make a sleeping child
Wake up with poetry.

20 November 2000

OLD PHOTO

Then could this really have been me
this snapshot I took at first for a view
down Millard Canyon into the firebreak
where the trees step back and the eternal sunshine
shimmers down the boundary of Altadena

this rock is my eye this stand of chaparral
my mouth open again and what am I saying
I hold the tired Polaroid up to my ear
it squeals like dinner plates under wet fingers

it grunts like an oil burner in the cellar o God
this once was a man like any other child
and now it's one more snapshot of the world

full of filth and animals and chemicals and chalk.

21 November 2000

to the sarabande of the fifth suite for cello

Something waiting
some thing that has
never spoken
speaking

21 November 2000

there are so many statues on the lawn I cant see the grass
all these pretended Gypsies speaking excellent Romani
I can barely speak my mother tongue the world is so deaf

there are so many flags in the sky the birds cant get by
snakes have no room to slither through construction sites
my hands cant reach you the room is so busy with ideas

the politicians have stolen the stars out of the sky the planes
have no place to land pale stewardesses grow old on the wing
and the wind knocked at my door to tell me you loved me

but he was trying so hard not to cry he had forgotten your name.

21 November 2000

for Charlotte

Because there is no one
Outside the music
No one but you
Inside me inside
What understanding
Understands what
Music hears

 No one
Hears the way in
The way you do
Sometimes I feel
Broken with distance
Then I know
It is always you always

The one who is present
Always in the interior
The space the hand
Is always (even
Asleep) holding.

22 November 2000

SURPRISE

The day the surprise comes
 is not itself a surprise
it has a sunrise and a busy noon
 a siesta erased by money
a happy hour at the neighborhood gin-mill

but still the surprise makes room for itself
 like a mouse inside a cheese it's eating
in a cartoon. That's right, folks,

a surprise eats time from inside out
the surprise is a prisoner with a file in his hands

and the bars won't last long beneath his frantic
 friction. Soon he'll be out

and the prisons all empty. Except for wind,

the wind and the surprise alone in the streets
after everyone has hurried home
 to their old nurse, the pillows heaped up on the bed

and the surprise screams in the empty street
and no one hears it but a child or two
 and nobody listens to children.

22 November 2000

WHY THANKSGIVING IS ALWAYS THURSDAY

Why Thursday was it
history who said

what did she say, Story,
storiella, a woman

Herodotus saw her
disappearing over the desert

her shadow fell on rock

and stayed, her shadow
always, fallen on the fact of the mind

as fact, that final fable.
As if there were a going and one who's gone.

23 November 2000

SHEEP WIND

A tea named
for something that has never been

the Noon Moon
the cathedral inside out.

But that is me, my darling,
no enclosure, all archi-

tecture reaching
for my lost

interior the dark
wonder inside you.

23 November 2000

Third planet from the One
and halfway down the hill to Brookline

we walked into precocious winter
glad of our wool. End of the personal.

From here on out, I am a pirate
on a dead ocean, an astronaut

indoors, a bank without a dollar,
I have been emptied of everything I thought.

And now I am sort of beautiful
if you like tall ignorant men

who don't know how to stop talking
all the way to Centre Street and the MBTA tracks.

23 November 2000
Boston

I wonder about all this history, Heraclitus,
And I have since my childhood felt sorry for your death
Even before I knew who you were and would be for me,
A word on the other side of words, a laugh
Beyond a tear beyond the sneer. I wonder how I knew
Enough to weep when I read old Cory's translation
Of the elegy, and heard first time of the sinister *they*
Who bring the bad news, heard the plangency
Of its repeated *They told me*, I wonder if I could
Forgive you for being dead before I knew you lived,
I learned how to grieve from you, your death
Taught me history, that someone went on caring
And spoke your name among the living, and cried
Because you were simply dead. Or precisely, because
Someone else told him you were dead. This news
Was news indeed for me, meant you had lived
And I could find you, the scowl at sunshine, the austere
Satyr sprinting through the surf, sea mist
Cool against your skin, fresh as the mind remembering.

23 November 2000
Boston

from an unborn book:

Dreamworks

Eating a bowl of cereal
I remember a dream last night
of a bowl of cereal

sharing it. Sharing a spoon.

*

un autre rêve:

a ritual
we talked about
for hours
till you asked me
to and I did

[Annandale]

*

The White Hen Conundrum:

As a convenience store is to a real supermarket
This world is to what?

(cs : sm :: w : x)

I'm sure there is an answer.
I wake up positive

for we make treaties with the world
to ask much and take little

but there is a world that gives us
more than we know.

[West Roxbury]

23 November 2000

Thinking about you
When we are both far away
From where we know ourselves

Not so far, a dream
Is always close

And two of them each night
Devote to you

Remarkable circumstances disclose your name:
Broken glass on the lawn

A dream is all the distance there is in the world.

24 November 2000
Boston

Wohnen, Wonne

Dwelling, delight, bliss

ecstase

as from a draught a dwale
of some snoozy opiate
you relax enough to be where you are

(real estate is the opium of the moneyed classes)
to *have* a house
to be a house*holder*,

such active verbs
we stagger
to carry,
have, hold,

(the way the liturgy bends a man to take a wife,
to have and to hold)

but to be near
in your presence
is to dwell anew

to be dwelling in a new way
that seems also very old
built into the deepest
customs of the mind,

I feel reinvented by you, rediscovered
by your, in your, presence.

The strength of *Wohnen*
calls out the intense *Wonne*, bliss, to come

even if (especially if) this bliss
is the unhurried presence itself,

the sense that just by being here with you
I can completely fulfil my own nature

and my desire?

What is desire? The *wonne* of *wobnen*

: to be inside someone
and find her body is in fact yours,

your long lost house,

and how does she find her home in him?

Can we live in gazes?

That is surely the Lady of the Lake,

the lake the eye
its gleam the gaze,

we live in each other's gaze, en ton regard

I, wounded by time and years,
sail into your gaze

like Arthur off to Avalon
in the old book,

Morgan la Faye, queen of the glance

by which (Dante tells us)
love is kindled,

apprehension is by eye,

Queen of the Glance in which the lover comes to *dwell*—

Wohne in mir. Wohnen in mich.

You be my grammar. I try to tell you how you feel

24 November 2000

**Let the nearest
Open the old door**

Let the dearest

—here the manuscript breaks off
and who knows
what the dear would do

and here we are in Wonderwood again
half into winter

and the deer streak down the little ridge
that separates the old shale of the lake we were

from a high hard continent long
ago lost into America

and the dearest should be busy there too.

25 November 2000

Aloe unpredictable
evidence succulence
in the desert

a whole Leopardi
ode would
speak from your green
fingers or are they feathers

lost Water Bird
trapped inside the earth
always trying to fly
up through us into so dry a sky?

25 November 2000

something if not sumptuous a photograph
of Jesus taken from an old chalice restored
to its rightful owner — the altar — lost
itself in the mountains of a questionable state
halfway between Zagreb and the moon

so I see in the papers the new nazis are busy
in Berlin they're walking from my Ostbahnhof
to nobody's Alexanderplatz I wonder
how scared we are or just disgusted heavy rain
is predicted but the minister of the interior says

the police have the situation in hand they say
grip in German but then they are a forceful
people as you can tell from the way they march and
one of them just got arrested for giving
the Hitler Salute and screams out what about freedom

of speech? & the policeman answers Freedom
of arms you mean? just lie down in the truck
you'll get your freedom soon enough he means the rain
that they'll all be walking through soon back home
or out for a beer and everybody identically wet

because politics is just another kind of weather
that only rarely kills but these bald adolescents
are the kind that do so momma keep them home
don't let your booted offspring strut along the street
screaming for justice they'd be the first to quell

then back to basics the uncles and the aunts
the ordinary houseplants and the fireplace
everybody is waiting for the world to go away
and leave them alone — this is called the Rapture
when you answer the doorbell one last time

25 November 2000

At least forgive
this aptitude for sin

it slakes thirsts
beauty made

to be within
the shimmer

to live inside color

become the interior
of what we see as skin.

25 November 2000

