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TO BE PRESENT IS ALWAYS TO BE IN FASHION

The hook that has us  
taloned to the curve of now

to be now  
                    in sunlight  
is to be the newest

and to be time's fashion  
all modes in one

this small green fly the only avant-garde.

22 August 2000

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Is that going to be my test  
to open the past  
the way a drunken nobleman  
stumbles down his cliff

and snatches eggs from a plover's nest  
if and only if the wind is stale  
and he can understand his pale  
new lover by the shadow of his last?

22 August 2000

---

He thought it was excitement  
only high blood pressure

thought the world was getting closer  
needed new glasses

thought he'd reached satori  
then fell asleep.

22 August 2000

## MADELEINE

The man I mean  
Comes after you

He sees you  
In the velvet of your industry

He makes the wine  
A little drunker

He makes the cock crow louder  
So your other lovers get up and gone

Leaving you warm in a dawn drowse  
Where he can find you

And you in your mind can  
Find him even without waking

In your mind and in your body  
The man you always knew was there

2.  
And though you'd rather listen  
To him than hear the wind in cypress trees

He knows how to listen too  
And makes you

Just by his silence tell.

23 August 2000

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Only at the beginning does the world make  
sense. After that, the truths divide.

Dependable truths and heuristic truths  
Or do I mean the truth divides

Into what we can use  
And into what is merely so?

Let's go for a walk — she'll say But Jack  
I'm married and you are too

I'll say the woods are green  
And all of this is true and none of it makes sense.

24 August 2000

---

Waiting by the told  
He tore a bell  
Out of the sky

Tell this  
To all of them  
Who do not listen

This  
Is a kiss

They hear  
Inside them  
Loud and near

Always closer  
Telling  
The unlikely truth.

25 August 2000

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It is not so much someone else who  
Or a ladder up against the pear tree  
Where Vinteuil's daughter climbs to play  
Our naughty games of name and number

But the daytime stars trapped in the branches  
Invisibly moored to our tactility  
So the only way we can experience such lights  
Remote as they are is to touch her skin

Local heroine of letting nothing stand between  
Desire and arousal, avowal and achieve.  
But why say anything? Just climb, climb  
Behind her up paradise's dangerous tree

And lose us in green encounters there  
With only the tell-tale wind to bruit about  
Our amber resinous rapture, our smell  
Doing dirt in heaven. You call it Fall.

26 August 2000



MIND

Mind says  
Stop  
Taking my name  
In vain.

Stop taking my vein  
In mind.

Stop taking  
My mind in vain.

26 August 2000

## SENECA IN THE SHADES

Cast me as amok  
my resident raincoat  
drenched from sweat and your  
monsoon, a double whammy  
on the humid path. Then clock  
my taxi at a Copenhagen rate  
all full of lies and sea mist,

buckle-shouldered, hunkering  
down to each other below the steps  
that lead from pure science  
up to applied mechanics,  
screw on the roof in shadow  
smelling tar and hear all round us  
everywhere the hum of thing.

Now that would be a library.  
Number sequences of truly random  
In silk camisoles, orderly  
Raptures we intuit in Alcyone,  
Or other star-bright Elsewhere.  
Fat chance. What we blow  
Down here stays fucked in heaven.

That's why churches are so precious,  
Chalice, ramshorn, dhikr beads —  
There's only one continuum  
At a time, and you are you  
Until you're not. And I'm not even that.

So have a care, seagull, what fish  
You cull, kill, swallow and become.  
It stays with you forever, this meat.  
You eat what you will be.

The earth's a claustrophobic kind of place,  
Myriads and sea walls, elevators  
Do not stop at every level  
And when they stop don't' always open.  
Doors that slide and doors that pivot wide —  
There is a difference, citizen,  
As at twilight you spread your arms  
To wrap them round me my  
Hands on your mauve uniform  
Ann this just the helter-skelter  
Of that late summer wind they call 'music'  
A drum coming over the hill.  
You can escape anything but what you want.

27 August 2000

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Count it.  
One.  
And one  
Again.

How many times  
Till it says two?

A city  
More bridges than Venice  
Still one and one

A water and something  
Over something else.

Is that enough?  
At the last light  
A differencing.

A kind of measure.

28 August 2000

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*...contradiction in the Divine Will: wish to contract and to create (thought-some lights), and wish to be in eternal state of the hidden mystery without any contraction or creation (thought-less lights).*

— Evgueni Tortchinov, citing Avraham Elqayam's study of Nathan of Gaza

Thought-some light  
I seek your welcome

You who always  
Knew me where I hid

What do you tell me  
Of coming

Of all the dark arrivals?

Do you still answer  
When the shoe calls out to the road  
And the fishpond calls out to the quiet silken dress?

28 August 2000

---

Penned me, the night  
Has a hold, headstrong  
Do-nothing-but-sit-with-me

And wait the hours out.  
Hold me, I am a lamentation  
In your lap, a man on fire

But the fuel soon gone. You know  
What happens to the burning tower  
The woman with the book on calculus

The eels of the Sargasso. Everything  
Is natural. This confusion alone  
Is a weird chemical artifice identity

Something the mind cooked up  
Using the scarce reagent of the real,  
The appalling catalyst of loss.

I sit with something broken in my hands.

29 August 2000

---

Measure everything and remember nothing.  
Or the other way round.  
Split hairs or split ends,  
A difference worth salve  
To smooth along the nape of you

Breath on the window pane  
When the rain is trying to tell you something.

Talk. It all is talk,  
The drunkards fumbling with their flies,  
Kids toppling tombstones, all

Are sedulous scholiasts  
Making their harsh footnotes.

But on what?  
What is the text  
To which life on earth supposes itself  
Somehow a relevant commentary?

30 August 2000

---

There is a bad  
Squirrel hanging upside down  
Eating the seeds we bought  
To feed our birds  
That come down out of our sky  
To peck our feeder  
Behind our house. So fuck off,  
Rodent. Unless you're our own  
Adorable furry pet. Our pest.  
Our clouds. Our mosquitoes.  
Everything, everything. Now  
And at the hour of our death amen.

30 August 2000



---

This year  
the lightning bugs  
have given the sign

later than ever

and David has noticed  
flicker in the northern woods

an amorous  
recognition, like  
calling to like

we can only  
read what we are.

30 August 2000  
*(responding to a poem from David Gruber)*

---

Don't call it that —  
It's not a measure

More like a moorland  
Bird, grouse or bittern

Maybe, that likes to hide.  
And I hide with it

Till the end of the world.

31 August 2000

---

all of it that I could  
in the last hot night

not height but hybridity  
breaking the measure  
he spent so many  
dreary hours to set up

and then the God was there  
welcome but uninvited  
or was it the other way round

the God with a voice like silver  
speaking in the exact middle of your mind

so that everything else was to the side and it was middle  
right there and you heard,

and I think that all you really have to do  
is leave the door open

and think about whatever comes up  
but not too hard

just let  
him find his own way in.

31 August 2000

---

or is that a kind of glass of wine  
spit in your palm  
and rub it with the other

till both hands foam with cool froth  
and you sink your face into your hands and drink

is that how it is,  
a woman complains and complains  
until you love her,

you run away and away until she forgives you  
and then no one has wine

and it's all right to have dry hands  
no matter how dark it is you know something is coming  
you know not even pain is permanent

and you have tasted this terrible vintage before.

31 August 2000

SOLVE FOR ANY **X**

The iridescent conquistador has slithered down your dream again  
like an English teacher counting syllables and surmising *sonnet* —

grief is all we're left with if we're lucky, funerals and money,  
your brilliant topaz dulled with years of

this is a collection of indecencies,

1.

*A Primer of Being Sad.*

*Amore fidele*, I cantilever Reason  
to bridge my doubt — Hercules  
came here before me  
and was content to sow  
the awns and beards the seeds of evening

so that he might reap the Perfect Dark,  
a wife of all wives truest to his need.

2.

Send me to sleep  
with the mothering prose  
in long Christian books  
such as read best  
between two candles lit

sharpening the text  
in the outrageous umber of the edge

o Margin Maiden, draw me your line.

3.

Forget the Merovingian suspicion  
(you've all read the book, don't play dumb,  
Jesus had children by Mary Magdalen,  
they came in time with Uncle Joseph  
to Marseille and from them the Blood  
of Kings and Holy Grail got found  
and lost and found down to our days)—  
just tell me who the king is now.

4.

Isis asked a little sparrow, Spudgy  
Why do you belly so in dust?  
He squeaked his witness thus:  
Reverend Lady on your chair

Birds like me are forever trying  
To enter the illusion of the earth  
And go down there to do our flying.  
A bird's wings are just like your breath.

Since all that lives must live in everything.

31 August 2000  
(first dr. 9 May)