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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

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

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

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

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

...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)