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Today, to get just one thing right.
To be recognized and welcomed
specifically by a hostess in my hand
greeting me at her door and I want to know
Do you really want me to be here?
Do you really knows me or want to know me more?
Do I have anything at all to do
with the space your body occupies so capably?

And this uncivil habit of mine, to be asking,
to want to be wanted, is what distinguishes me
just as much as the over-warm hand I slip
dog-like with hope into cool hers.
A party is it? A reception. (What is parted?
What is received?)

25 February 1995

5

I am certainly five.

A self is five
kinds of mistake all
work gloriously sometimes one. A song.
Am five.

Mother calls me from the hollow of my throat
where Cari back from Madrid scares me by explaining
a finger or a pencil jabbed will cause gag reflex
so attacker doubles up while you flee,
W, X, run away, Y, Z, White Sea,

learn another language, write poetry,
send it home, maybe it will please,

father calls me from the anger in the head, sister
from the kidneys luring, brother from the lung,
we all are Geminis, sister from the haunches, brother
from the sack, mother
calls me from the hollow of my throat and still just one.

*Only one mother does a poor man have,
A woman has millions as you know*

diamonds and Jersey ice and ruby tails on fleeing limousines.
A tunnel takes a city somewhere else
far glooms of a meadow dawn

Five a.m. The cat ice holds
trembling stretched
between reed and reed
skyscraper sway of grass
plague-grass, humbleweed,
vetch dead on the embankments

seeming, blue later, no sun yet.

I remember the shudder of your boat,
the plunge of you on any prong,
the will to welcome.
Where is the dawn that will me be one?

Body calls me
but who is she?
A man's body is a woman.
Voice calls me, but who is she?
A man's voice
is his mother weeping.
Mind tells me,
but who is mind?
Mind is the silence
when the wind falls,
time spill, a mind
has no hope and
has no fear but who is he?
A man's mind is
nobody's business.

Beeswax. Activities.
Do this. Deeds
call me but who are they?
They are today
and tomorrow,
they are everything
that finds me,
ready or not, streetlight
and ringaleavio, they
are Sanskrit and her skirts,
they are shibboleth
and semaphore and fire
watched too long
in tedious frenzy,
they are French trains,
Ariane in stratosphere,
parsley, Mundesley, weed,

weld.

Say the many
of them again,
I can do everything they are.
But who am I?
Essence calls me, my fifth me,
but who is he?
Pirate treasure in a milky sea.
Man with one eye
patched and a million
secretaries
ready to take his littlest
letter but who is he?

Essence of a man is empty,
a closed eye on a waking woman,
a storm far out at sea
incommoding no one,
an empty jam jar
you tried to catch one
August evening
lightning bugs in
and you succeed.

26 February 1995

SOME ETHNIC SLURS

Some people are led by the nose. Some by the ear,
or the hand, or genitals. This determines
national character. Some few
are led by the tongue, are led astray
or upward by what they can say.
These are the Celts, my people, shivering
in a two thousand year long winter
waiting for the sun to rise
over the abstract horizon shaped like a great ear.

27 February 1995

ELEGY

Spurious consolations maybe
but the trees are real
mother or the lilacs
one has a habit of waiting

for the smell of them down the hill
white on the left
their eponymous color
on the right where are you

how far from any
springtime opportuning
this time we sat and watched
the swans cruise in from the bay

silent as they and unequipped
with anything to say
of use to them or that
we had not long ago heard.

27 February 1995

The birthday of the whirling Dervish the palm
spread up for blessing down for transmitting
whatever he gets from all that turning

to us who do not know how to turn. A body
is the spindle of that weaving. A body
is that transmission. Transmutation.

Turn until the earth changes into you,
spin a planet round your brittle ears,
and let us live a little in your fertile choices.

28 February 1995