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Taking chances.
It guesses me.
There is disclosure.
Any city shows
and what it
shows is who
you are living in.

Delicate bronze nudes
poised in parks
impeach all of us,

I could show so much
if I were
just tin or marble

but I am time
and weather, all
the habits of light.

Now show me yourself
being me,
show me how skin sings

how skin is silent
and skin is
just a dance between

celebrity sun
and the whole
dark republic in you

show me them both,

gleam gospel, shape
of the unseen sound

the skin surrounds us
we are shown
infinitely some.

1 August 1995

[reading from a scrap of *Under Words*, page 27]

I am a new face

the self is a doctrine
closed by suicide

every silvery detail

to leave this place
or there are lovers

fingering the light.

1 August 1995

THE MODALITY

A month slow beginning
to *swelt in Catskill
at the will with

raked bare earth clean
of African courtyards
house on stilts

we walk on water

lake or river, marrow
or the tundra I desire,
cloud cold, the fell.

The things
please me.
At some point
in one's life
one comes to what matters,

snowfall, touch of grace
played on the eyes of
someone really looking at me
as if to see me and be seen —

by glance alone the gods first mated

and all we see around us is
progeny of that ardent seeing

and we love to cluster
birdwise at the nurturing visible.

A goldfinch sounds like any other finch but he is gold.

2 August 1995

Have you seen this?
A pelican
with a beak full of air,

a blackbird too
heavy for the reed he sways on,
geese in a cornfield

grazing? Of course you have.
You are of earth
and [?colors] are just pluses of your
silvery attention.

2 August 1995

Rain came. Thun'er storm
monsoonal. Marsupial heat
(in which we are pouched)
gave way to shiver. A moment
of life air, a winter. Moonsound.
Life is moving air in only
when you're breathing that you live.
The beautiful flurry in your breast
miles and miles before desire.

2 August 1995

[image of trilithon]

When in doubt, erect a trilithon
and wait for grace.

It worked for England
and the Druid shade
nurtured many a blood-purple flower
and ruled the world a while
till the Sun thought something else.

The seven loaves of bread
Utnapishtim's wife laid
beside the sleeping Gilgamesh,
one each day to mark his sleep

are the seven religions of this world,
one for each planet
by which we're ruled

and like the bread religions stale,
grow hard, mildewed,
inedible. Only the fresh one
is of use,
the one you find beside you when you actually wake.

3 August 1995

One is other and there's laughter.
One is reincarnated (Robespierre to Hitler,
Danton to Stalin, Saint-Just to Mao Tse-tung)
killer after killer. The impersonations
endure long enough for millions to die,
mountain of dead men's glasses at Pnomh Penh.
This is the condition of our politics,
eyeglasses broken in the mud.

4 August 1995

AN ARIA FROM *Cenerentola*

And these Rossini ornaments that move me so much
now, the awkward portamento of the baritone,
his bleating bel canto — I hear it now and mark
it in my mind, telling myself: *on a day to come, in some
future life, when you hear this, you will know
that you have lived on earth before.*

Then I stop and ask if hearing it right now
is not just such a signal from a past life? It is,
it is! I have lived before, and this is one
of the moments I foresaw, fore-told,
when a mindstream ties a knot in time
and says *Remember this*. This
will mean *Before*. And *Before* will mean it's all
true, all the faint somber surmises of ongoingness.

4 August 1995

MAKING

Sabersaw, the heroism of
red-coated soldiery
turns into men working on houses.

Everything comes from a gun
and the womb we weave in,
where is that?

Down the glen where the dead
build new houses for the living.

4 August 1995

WEATHER

To talk about the weather is to say: you and I are mortal, we live on a risky planet with a bad outcome more than likely. Meantime, something we don't understand smites us with sun or freezes us or consoles us with breezes. Here we are, nothing to be done. But in this sense we are one.

4 August 1995

S E X

The ancient, never-published Roué's Vademecum
Proust quotes from too. It's not just Bukowski,
Miller and low-syntax wolves who cite it.
Bad sagacity. Tricky policy. Oiled hearts
in crinkly paper, with a trace of after-shave.

These are the serious enemies of sex,
who propose it as a deed or feat of arms,
a diplomatic victory, a coup d'état.
Sex means: to make us closer to the mind by feeling.
Everything else is statistics. Hysterics. Obstetrics.

5 August 1995

A note on feeling:

Shared intensity shows the boundlessness of mind.

Leaf or bird,
dead or poised?
A fleet of differences
convoy across the eye.
One guess at a time
decides nothing.
Spiritual pilgrimage
from thing to thing.

5 August 1995

R A J

How did the common soldier
handle the heat in his scarlet
woolen tunic, the Indian heat
before the Monsoon, the sky
like bronze with a fire in it?

I notice I wrote monsoon with a capital
M. Like mother, magic, money
it delivers us. Why us? Just once
it delivered me, I got to India
the day before. 113 in Delhi.
And then the rains.

5 August 1995

ANXIETIES

The mother cost of sheer
anxiety
 a sparrow in shadow
eats the world

Travel: the why
of situations,

why be here more than another?
Bird answer: seed has kinds.

Find.

Write each name in its own color
till you find one that has none—
that is he.

Tasks we inherited once for all
watching the March ravens
swoop low over Somerset
perennially green

precocious ruin
I was born
before the war

Rain dripping from a tree
rain dripping down a spout
or all that had been rain
now is only sound of water.

The month's one rain floods all the streets.

6 August 1995