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ELEMENTS OF INFRASENSORY PROJECTION

White tantra spins apart the skull cup is full of plums
beginning to wither from the almost frost. I told you
all that I could and more than I knew. Because of me the roses
in Queen Mary's gardens one more time incarnadine
barebones fossicking among the recent dead a trove
of laughing grass, a smithereen of Pyramid bumps me
in my good right eye, there is a history of mystery,
a bland passage from the thief's hand to my pocket
until I am an Empire and you sleep. Dream me again.
I rub my eye. Obelisk. Some rivers seem flatter than others
(Elbe than Seine; Hudson than Delaware; why? Check
Pacuvius's *Amnis Amnium*. Water has a property
called meniscus, a little moon, a bowing upwards
to meet the glandular powers of the sky.) Doctors
are not much help. Saint John's Wort might
be worth a smile. Stand in the health food store
inspecting stubby fleshy girls in overalls who exemplify
at cash registers the qualities presumably desired.
There is something wrong here. One keeps gaining weight
and losing time. Therefore have I set sail in my skull
to cross the flooded gutters of my neighborhood.
And now the frost is real, is full, the veins of green leaves
fall to dying, if death is that kind of breathless
answer from which—in no time at all—an utterly
different question gets to strut around in different clothes.
Breathless the way ice is, or juices stop
mounting in the sappy highways of the tree, really,
most of this music is just vaseline. Today we saw
the photo of a woman dead five hundred years,
her face a little blurry but her husband would have known her,
her teeth are better than mine. She was a victim,
Andes offering. *Ein musikalisches Opfer* also means
a musical victim, musical torture, musical ordeal.
How many meanings can a word have before we hear it?

That terrible subway fire in Baku, three hundred died,
and the papers tell about it by remarking: the mosques
are full, funeral music drifts above the smoky Caspian sea.
What was my mind doing while I was looking at her face?

30 October 1995

TO THE POETS

At the Mallorcan assizes your enemies
have thought of everything. There is no remedy
in law, every common noun's a perjury.

Yet there is a reddish flower, hot islands heed you,
I need you, this is something about coming back again,
the weather is your only prize,

the back of the day broken, the afternoon stuffed with rain
and I'm the only one listening. Mildew
grows under the crown of your hat, your birds are all liars.

31 October 1995

GHAZAL OF ESTABLISHING THE ACTUAL LOCATION OF SOMETHING

The idea is to tie the rock down and beat it till it sleeps
because the sorcery of ordinary satins gossips too much with the wind

the elm tree you're so worried about, timber and bark, is a torch
the fire of things burns in the thin air of ideas

you came home to your hometown and found it was a lake
your bed was full of mud your kitchen was crowded with gulls

no wonder every stranger reaches out to you with hands that speak English
the touch of your skin is like the sun going down behind trees

[31 October 1995]

BLURB

There is a Biblical quality in poetry, an impassioned rush to revelation. But, just as in the actual Bible, each revelation is of another mystery. The curtain is swept aside to expose something even more concealed than what had hidden it. Language can never cast itself off. Its satin becomes the skin, as you can tell when you look close, close, at the soft luster of your nearest hand. And blood too is veiled in light.

31 October 1995