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This is all we need,
this quiet livery
as they quaintly call
the cabs in service

this vehicle.
Taste me, I thought
to tell them,
I am the vintner

who brings release.
It's only wine
they meant,
the taste of never

lighting up this now.
The driver knows better.
He knows a glade or bower
not far from the road,

it will rain there
on the ancient dancers.
He blows his horn
to tell them he's there.

Listen, it is the last
of things, you called him,
later you will pay him
the last of your coins.

9 March 1994

FLASHLIGHT VARIATIONS

It must be destiny such lifting up the light
like an old man carrying a torch

those long five D-cell flashlights farmers
used to carry in the war
I envied, a thyrsus of light
a glare of manhood in the swainish night
heavy as plumbing, a world is made of weight,
today every twig is sheathed in ice

could it be I thought that I am not different from that?
Things are put in different places, things light up,
bodies of stone are put in the museum
and the book the child is reading calls them by name,
smooth white of their names, Canova, Donatello,
Michael Angelo
but they all look like the same boy
hips slim as a flashlight

or in church they pray to an Invisible Body
and they say This is That,
this thing to touch (Don't touch!)
is really Him, the invisible
boy (Touch me now,
Miriam,
 and your touch will take me back
and I be born again
of you and daylight,
born like light at morning
coming — and people know this,
they just don't want to know it,
light is born out of the ground,

that's where the morning comes from and I go,

fumbling with all these future flowers)

By boylight walk the world and see what isn't born
and touch the hot headlights and
clasp the flashlight in your hand,
the light seeps through your fingers
and you see the color of the inside of us,
that living crimson Goethe called *rose-purple*.

10 March 1994

What does it ask?
The weather.
The weather is enough.
A seacoast touches it.
Every day the ice is less
until the ocean reaches us.
Today only four miles south.

What will we give?
The weather.
A candle burning
stuck in split wood
something there enough to hold
light steady

For an hour or two
the town falls away to the river
and we know where that goes

And still they're asking
And still the weather knows.

12 March 1994

That they sing.
That others among them
sit at pianos with bare feet
painful the pressure on the pedal of the ball of the bare foot
try to find the arch on there instead
but we write with our fingers not our palms so
others among them have silently left the room.
They smile in distant places,
their wives persuade them to kayak
or they stand in mountains of light
or they have dreams
they have to take something out of someone's pocket.
The mirror in front of them reflects the sound of a guitar.
They look around
down a very long hallway someone is waiting.
That people do have eyes like some animals.
That one place is like another place,
“wolves prowl freely around her summerhouse.”

13 March 1994

(for Charlotte)

**as if
there (here)
were any**

but flowers

**to speak to you
where none
is gone**

**holding
the dear
forever
of
a recollected
rose**

13 March 1994

These are
imaginary presences, flooding with starlight
and then the awkwardness of prophecy
suddenly speaks: Mankind overawed with fleece.

Hear me. There are kings
who know less of this than I do
just because I attended to the tree.
Look, the peach gum sticky on my hand.

13 March 1994

Exhibitors of larger cattle
often make it their business
to arrange clouds over dingles
full of young rye to show
their beasts to best advantage.

Us is this. Displayed blue
in a jewel of a planet we
brought all the colors with us as we fell
and wander browsing each mirandish
promontory, headlands of aha,
gasps of lakeliness. We!

Naked in our fine clothes! Bearing
the grapefruits of heraldry high
and bannering streams of written words
pronounced by our pale sensuous lips,
what an advertisement!
For a bankrupt cartel who made us
when once there was a taste for what we are,

all bluishness and shimmerings and bluff.

14 March 1994

*for my uncle Barney,
the Rosicrucian*

Dear uncle you are mostly home
movies walking shyly smiling
with the light you left me
when you died into my mind I was nine

I have looked for you ever since every
day I find the trace of you the track
of your dear feet sometimes naked
sometimes a manly smell like the sleeves

of my father's shirt sometimes the cool
skin of the girl next door Loretta
the busses still pass us where is she
where are you you are veiled in the thick

thing I have had to become to be you
or be near you or speak with your voice
old soldier old traveler lost in Russia
your feet wrapped in rags stumbled

all the way home to the Rhine my father
found you in his song he stood in the choir
and sang Bread of the Angels out loud
in the desolate church who heard him

who hears me singing to you now
lord of every ever I meant the mild
blue light I have stumbled to follow
glued inside flowers flickering subways

there is a river there is a thing worth hearing
in the back of the north wind in my head
whirlpools glitter with gold dust
you carry me there in your hand

you set me down at the wellhead I fall
to the little house with the infinite cellar
where I travel forever past all my dead uncles
scrabbling paws of terrified raccoons

it has to be this way you have gone there
and carried your blue light the smoke
of your tape-mended pipe your brochures
from the Rosicrucians your eyes

your eyes with tears in them with sleep
you are there in clean linen pajamas
waiting for your unborn children a place
there is where nothing is left to remember

you told me about it with light with
chewing gum with soft yellow cheese
you told me about it and I have traveled
just this one lifetime to find your lost word.

14 March 1994

LEARNING THINGLISH

A kind of wearing down
that does not feel bad, a prose
explaining what failed to come clear
in the glorious Thinglish of our dreams.

Not mine. I have to write my dreams,
learn Thinglish thing by thing until it's clear.
Then only am I ready to talk roses,
plant doubts, wear the insolent optimists down.

15 March 1994

A WATERING CAN

Oval by and large
a handle one side and a spout
the other at a generous angle

terminated by a brazen head
pierced many pored
for sprinkling

Lift this
You have a date with dust
God calls you

make wet what can.

15 March 1994

The slippery things come back to us
Filled with new sensations.
I don't like it when you sound like newspapers.
Make new flags. Trim your fingernails.
The sump pump starts and stops.
It is one way the stream is free,
Let's walk on the mountain while we can,
In quiet practice till oaks answer.

15 March 1994

Morningly the debt is paid
by wake and triumph to renew
this quiet light. Winter weak now
or is it breathing.

Faint prism

play round I see, a bow
dissolved in arrowings, a fall
of color over us, pale pale
and the stream is hurrying.

Morningly my breath comes in.
I mean every morning it so happens
that I live. Wake. What a wonder
that a something in me that breathes out

last night knows to breathe in again.
Now. And this breath of in
is morning-knowledge,
all we need and, in the gap
we left undreaming, found
all answerly this simple breath.

Do this till you know what morning knows.
There is nothing that is not this breathing.

15 March 1994

Suppose that in addition to this lust
to make some connection by speaking
I actually had something to say to you.
Even that would be mostly description,
your body, your name, your eyes—

things you don't need me to itemize.
Then there would follow some imagistic fiction,
what it would be like, some future with you
ever more erotic and at the same time seeking
some metaphysic grandeur for our common must.

We don't need that. Our minds have traction
on what our skins would feel if I touched you,
action upon action, up till the last forsaking.
But even then not know how much of this is lies.

16 March 1994

STAYING

Pale light snow sifts slow
blue cars go
a little bronze auto from Japan
reminds me of Brazil,
the people who.

Winter

maybe is not long enough,
maybe we should run or fly in place
like those seabirds in a fierce headwind
we saw from Rhinecliff station
until we understand our situation.
I fear these coming springs, the *faux*
relenting, the image of forgive.
It isn't by dying that Jesus rose
glorious into endless consciousness
but by some previous snowfall of the mind
that ended all the rage of difference
into a white compassion.
Nothing comes automatic
except maybe the morning mind
serenely unbecoming. Snow more.
Snow harder. It is Wednesday, after all,
the local name for now. The cars
go faster, conscious of an awful assignation,
wet roads, metaphysics, taxes, drunkenness.
Let winter last. All knowing
and no going. Until we're truly able.

16 March 1994

Yesterday we saw the everlasting
Periwinkle fresh and sturdy under
The hem of the receding snow. Eternity
Is nothing but particulars. Only these
Are green. Praxilla knew this:
A moon, a cucumber, these
Endure. Not unchanging but there
Enough for us to find them
Forever. This little light of things
Shimmering, never ending, this cloth
We're sewn from that no one wears.

16 March 1994

