

3-1994

## marC1994

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Whom it is allowed to read

a man called Word  
a book for half a dollar  
full of the other history  
of this same world  
they call the dark —you must  
be wide awake to read it

plums on the trees money in your arms  
in old houses on hill sides  
a man among the masks the women  
staring himself in the face  
at evening, worn out by wanting

each touch an inscription  
in an unknown language  
he was born to decipher

and all the words so rescued  
recoil on him, become his word  
he speaks unclearly,  
the nurse bends low to hear him,  
he touches her thigh and dies  
as if touch were all we ever had to say.

17 March 1994

M A R C H

Can we wake the want inside the fear again  
—there may be a certainty (villa —  
summer — Tiber — grapes  
to be touched — hard — into wine,

drink these interruptions

mode of fair woman  
encastelled in the sleeping city,

wake this wind now, walks hard  
up among the sycamores.

17 March 1994

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The womb was difficult,  
things, and doors.  
Going through. To have been there  
so long (each month a decade  
of life in air).

And be forgiven  
into this. How can I bear  
to do it again? By that Protective  
Ignorance. Keeps the thing.  
The things. Going.  
Through the door.  
The far-off music, that strange  
breathy yelping turns  
out to be language.

Happy Birthday. It turned out  
it was not enough  
to turn somebody on.  
Each of us. Needed.  
Further handling. Treatment  
(traction) in this infinite

regard. Look at me.  
No one  
has ever  
been older  
than you.

18 March 1994

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All those Canada  
geese

over just one  
woman

s' head  
a maze

meant for me?

18 March 1994

[responding to Catherine Schieve's **e-music** of even date]

## GRAIL STORY

If I got close to the farrier would I feel the horse at last especially that sinew running from the storm-clouds down by way of the withers to the iron hoof and that muscle not slay but instruct me (the way an old woman does with a very young child, when life is something not wholly in either of their grasps)? If I stood with his curry-comb his file his fire patiently at the animal's even more patient side (red as oak leaves after the hardest winter of our lives) and waited for his articulate needs to move me could I be said to be a man among Moseses an ordinary traveller, an eater of savory dhal?

I wanted to be a goer, one who left the polished highway but never the vehicle, who powerfully snaked the old Pontiac through pine woods and chasms, and down that sensuous ravine all water waits for but I hurried, there! to the cleft in the absolute earth that runs straight to the dome, the blue-light laccolith city in the sheath of earth's mantle where all magic is boiling and old books and radishes on white plates and the way cheese changes in the night and paper suddenly fills with light-giving words and their eyes were always waiting for me, there was never a problem of *finding*, all I had to do was go. Assent to the edges and just go.

19 March 1994

## SPRING SONG

I have brought my tools — the butter and the man,  
the cup with the moon in it, you know,  
the old dry tree that suddenly  
has a dream of its own,

green one,

I loved you as you bare-stepped up the shingle  
from our Severn. My tools  
include remembering you,

*smrti,*

everything that has been spoken but not written,  
thought out but not shouted, maybe whispered,  
dreamed and thus done.

For dream  
is a mighty doer

and I have brought those dreams to stack up in the night  
higher than cities, a whisper

everyone can hear, frightening the crowd with wooden spoons.

20 March 1994

**[revised version]**  
S P R I N G   S O N G

I have brought my tools — the butter and the man,  
the cup with the moon in it, you know,

the old dry tree that suddenly  
has a dream of its own,

the green one coming  
bare-instepped up the shingle

from our Severn. My tools  
include remembering her,

everything that has been spoken but not written,  
thought out but not shouted, maybe whispered,

dreamed and thus done.

For dream  
is a mighty doer

and I have brought those dreams to stack up in the night  
higher than cities, a whisper

everyone can hear, frightening the crowd with wooden spoons.

20 March 1994 / **29 April 1994**



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I am hungry  
the river  
looks like a loaf of bread.

20 March 1994

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As entering on a causeway filled with stones  
and surfaced over with slabs of shale a man might  
cry out for his wife and wonder where she is,

he left her sleeping in a gaunt motel and now  
stands across the street from an immense orrery  
operating around the largest spherical building on earth

over which a gilded polychrome caparisoned steed  
is circling, a sensuous mechanism if there ever  
was one prancing in the sky and he is alone.

But I want to know more than that  
I want the Terrorist to be captured on the moon  
his great sickle of a face reaping the dark.

I want to know things are as they are— the great orrery  
big as The Cyclone, big as a roller-coaster in Japan—  
whirls slow to move all the planets we have and mark

each by each planet's god, riding serene  
or upside down or blindfolded in red velvet,  
each god or goddess in his or her car, golden car,

and the blue sky seemed like an impertinence.

21 March 1994

## OFFERING MILK TO THE MOUNTAIN

As ever as was compatible with blue information  
the nuts hidden by squirrels are they between rafters of  
this is not my house my house is a pale remark  
left out in the rain where is it now the pigeongrey of its exhaustion  
like light when who slept? You take off your clothes  
for no better reason than memory. This is what we do.  
Profligate trolley cars going our own way waking  
everybody up it is old-fashioned it is raining it is a city.  
We follow the grooves in which sturdy lengths of steel are laid  
dully glistening in thick reminiscence. When I am born  
I bring the whole world with me into light. This very world.  
This only. It remembers me piece by piece until I am it.  
Tail lights. Battle of Jericho. The old woman explaining Jesus  
wrongly I think. What do I know. What do I know?

22 March 1994

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On action guard. Spelt scattered at the cavemouth. Who lives here, for that matter? All I meant to ask was now. Cloud on a capstone, a well unsealed. Drink me down there, drink me down. Drench in wanna. In the water far down there the stars are seen displayed in mirror order rayed, special, inside out. On Captiva Island waiting for her dough to rise.

If we said what our dreams told us, there wouldn't be a sane conversation left on the planet. Imagine the headlines if we told what we knew, especially if we told what we were told to say:

FINALLY PERMITTED TO INSERT

THROW SPOONS AT TO MAKE WHO LOVE  
YOU

BITE A BEACH AND LET SALT  
SILENCE ME

And so on. But we don't. It seems important not to. Yet it means that every day, every day, we disobey our dreams. Disobey our dreams but live. What Iroquois would dare? Yet we do, and seem to survive, but how long? Is that what is killing us all the time? Guesstion mark.

Some kind of silence is our science, maybe our best one, and have to make do with that. To the committee of the dead presiding over our ridiculous preferences and pathetic hopes. Hereby submitted to your sinister, but kindly-meant, authority. I have spoken.

22 MARCH 1994

## ASBESTOS

Asbestos? Something better, eliciting  
sweetest traumas of seduction. After seeing  
both elected senators trying on sleepwear,  
a sigh breathed. Every sign touches our skin.

22 March 1994

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To escape into sensation,

out of description into pure filthy sensation  
the animal of me  
marking the territory of the sky

making mine and making me.  
Forget everything into pure mindfulness

to run away into this one I am.

23 March 1994

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This is where I have it in mind  
to open the door  
and therein will I find  
an old man lurking

the way a smell lingers  
in the hair  
this old party in his room  
assembling his prayers

glimpses of the moon  
help him and the chickadee  
waltzing on the windowsill  
and the wind

whatever it brings  
and the brick wall old  
brick wall across  
the courtyard color of

Missouri in spring thaw  
I wonder who he is  
in me his raptures  
pass into snoozes his

nobleman's fingers  
still dance on the margins  
of books he half  
reads half remembers

words or sunbeams  
who can tell  
the difference  
is a tower he lives

taking it all in  
his head his heart

that thing so far  
away his body is

a door  
is not different.

23 March 1994



## MARCH

Whose majesty would be different  
were a block of wood  
shaved off a living tree and still  
slavering with pine sap  
the stick of it I handle  
holds tight to me — this  
is the material world. I am it  
particular. You come along  
with it. I am stupefied  
at the grandeur of this simple  
failure, a thing  
in the world of intentions.  
High wind in bare trees.  
In this forest we walk in music.

23 March 1994

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Once more from the gay lord an apparition  
uncoiling like rhododendron leaves at thaw  
like anything you choose, and you do choose, every  
spineless drifting wifty act long ago is chosen  
and by you. So when the Lord of Liking It shows up  
and beckons from the corner, be calm.  
His face is your face. You eat  
what you are eating with. We call  
and it is love, we sleep and it is world  
we wake to shivering. Until we find him again  
never dependably far away.

24 March 1994

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When we are  
only a part if that  
of something  
a radish or a root

something they eat  
or throw away  
our chances  
diminishing with frost

to be at all  
let alone to be  
consumed  
a verity lingering

in the way my finger  
feels on my skin  
a trance of ordinary  
selfishness

the touch itself  
auguring some  
other as if the goal  
of being were being

in relation to.

24 March 1994

## A FRIDAY IN GERMINAL

I have something to tell you green  
I think if we stopped killing  
we might soon stop dying

2.

Think of a single day on earth without murder—  
what would the weather learn  
from our forbearance, what would the rocks  
change into if they saw that we,  
greatest of all killers among the beasts,  
the Animal with Enemies, that we  
had stopped at the door of our house  
and put the rifle down, and the hangman  
left his terrified clients to sleep late  
and the abortionist went to the mountains  
and fishermen stayed home, and nowhere  
nobody killed nothing, is that right,  
three nevers make one forever?

3.

And this is the day when an angel  
walked through the window and announced  
through a shimmer of rainbow remarks  
that nothing was hurrying into something  
and a brightness lit up the girl's body  
we still can see our way through the dark with,  
dull glow of godhead in the gloom of desire.

There is just enough light to see not to kill.

25 March 1994  
Feast of the Annunciation

A G N O S T I C F R A G M E N T , A F T E R M E L V I L L E

Sent sort of unbidden to the well  
he wondered what to do with all the water  
the stars were in it the silvery pail went down  
and hauled up everything he knew how to see

and all the rest he tasted. *Drink me down*  
he hears it saying and he assumed  
the water knew his name,  
remembered him from the last time

when the stars first fell into the well.

25 March 1994

## ROUGH ROAD

My handwriting  
shakes  
time  
is passing so fast.

25 March 1994

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Can it meet? We need  
the inly going  
if we would account for those woodsy madmen,  
women, in the high pine places  
deviating around the god. For a god  
is always someone new  
and an old god hardens to a law.

So the stories of origin tell or should tell:  
When the world was very old  
already the gods were young  
and in their novelty did this and that.  
High fives on the steps of heaven,  
go and find the galaxy you left in last night's clothes.

Thrilling boredom of pure observation!  
Pentheus! King Grief in Vision.  
Eardrums understudy jungle telegraph  
—words always just confuse him

When you hear them speaking (or us speaking)  
withdraw your mind and think about  
a red tile roof in Tuscany silence by noontime heat.

25 March 1994

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The war at the door.  
Cat skunk squirrel  
chipmunk possum mole  
and the high blue stukas of the jays—

it goes like that from idea to pretty  
in one upwelling frightened glide  
glissando on the harpstrings.  
Poetry.

26 March 1994