

6-1994

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## THE NATURAL

Wood march  
closing in

the green battalion  
that takes our lives

breathless with character  
a destiny arrives

oxygen destroying like flowers  
the trees come down the hill

white sailed, wearing  
a dark red poppy in the buttonhole

like a wound I promise to give you  
and you put on

trembling with equivoque  
not sure even yet I have it right

what I'm trying to say is that my urgency to you  
is not just like but is alas an actual part of

the boundless  
push of 'nature' (all we know)

towards fulfilments and extinctions  
in its huge beautiful idiot dualities

I mean like this field of tall dapper weeds  
hurrying inward and downward towards our house

like a relentless(because mindless) mist.

5 June 1994

DUHKHA

Chatter for a pilgrim  
from these pilgrim arts

nothing not the same  
be bodiless

courage of blue things or be bare in splendor  
circumstance is motherhood enough

a trowel needs one day alone to marry other  
the grit holds hair together our immigrant buildings  
sand and long black hair

stress is universal suffering  
to say it straight a party of noisy children  
each sacramenting solo inner own separate feeling

the *Existenz* inside blue path and Africa  
our pointless revels come to hand.

6 June 1994

## THE PURIST

The spiritual range or the day  
come back

                  humidity you old seducer  
Juneable in sunhaze how  
it brings a city to her knees  
with amorous complaining με μουσικες,  
like a cat and a cat and a newborn babe

the sky is sick  
inside her clothes

language is on loan, the breath  
alone  
may be our own

(and Flaubert tried to own it,  
*Dictionnaire* of his spleen about clichés, about  
received expressions,  
the words  
all too common,  
too mean to mean,

and wanted to purge it,  
make it pure and just again

but all  
you can purge from language  
is other people

7 June 1994

## THE PROPRIATE

what is our own  
maple is our own  
a tree or Berkeley  
People's Park strolling  
through the stoned  
zones unscanted  
leaf-battered as may be  
in strong sun  
happy as Egypt  
as a termite  
keep the Hittite  
sun north and the shadow  
of a woman  
be my side  
no a gate a doorway  
into the inmost  
holymost that moving  
altar with me all  
my days in the Name  
of the Name  
and of his Mother  
*ve le-olam hasdo*  
her mercy also  
that would be our speech.

7 June 1994

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When you know what the god looks like  
you are ready to impersonate him  
you think with your eyebrows your shoulderblades  
everything you learns in Descartes is no benefit now

you have to think with your hipbone  
like a common dancer with your ankle  
like a common million-dollar athlete.  
Who are you now with all the bones thinking?

You are the god your eyes are rolled up inside  
they turn into one eye in the flank of a pyramid  
you've seen it all your life and now you become it

you are it and you rattle around you are a car a door  
banging open and shut in wind on the endless prairie.

8 June 1994

## A BOOK OF MAPS

Who knows where weather went  
one hurries to declare whatever is unnatural—  
the rest needs no saying, hence valentines  
to speak to a spirit roused by joining  
that is not just for joining. All through the light  
crows busy [*verb*] on the lawns. We know a word  
that waits— the Baltic shallows deep  
enough to swallow any man. A whole army  
is one breath deep. Past counting  
all sorts of wise remarks occur to one (I am  
a street. Discover the city each one must be,  
hamlet or metropolis.) but does one listen?  
From the garish earnestness of the Cathedral  
you go down Vauxhall Bridge Road to the river.  
Too big, the place, for the religion. Impressive  
rather than beautiful. Effective? Don't know.  
Had only these effects on me: refused a beggar  
on the steps. And now say this. Remember  
the sheer seductions of Eric Gill line by line.  
Art! What little sense you make of emptiness!  
With a long walk and crossing Chiswick Bridge  
you'd come to Mortlake. The river there  
is said on certain oily mornings to reflect  
the flames that once burned John Dee's library.  
Stare into the distressed stream and hope  
Since the crematorium is not far.

9 June 1994

## AT THE ALTAR OF THE LARES

Ripe to re-personate that deity or that dead  
occasion with brass buttons how well the years  
polished them against the midnight blue of his coat  
my grandfather my serge I carried his baton  
in ornamental urgencies, neat riots,  
crownings in Himalayan monarchies, or cats in heat.  
We inherit so few instruments, and these were mine:  
a wand of light wood turned and polished black,  
his. A red blank notebook with many pages,  
his son's. A ball of yarn, rough tingly blue, hers,  
with glints in it that made me think of August lightning.

10 June 1994



**When you know the mind you know what is to come**

easy sayables of men drinking together  
in the shadow of a tree not making much sense

or no sense but contact — strongest of all chains

talk to me true and tell who the shadows are  
and what this mockingbird is up to talking now  
while the crow speaks with native fluency a field away  
all the sweet clichés white and red and their thorn twigs  
and everything quiet except for the far trafic

I say to know all this is to know nothing  
I tell you for no reason  
except that you can know me knowing.

11 June 1994

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Rain spatter trim my tree  
I have an open mind I can't get started  
blue prairie I have to learn these people  
a friend's vague eyes and Ūlumukhâ's owl face  
all worlds the interpenetrate the sudden now  
I lift this cup of gods my body drink me  
Prince Andrei is still looking at the sky.

2.

Who are these people? Words fall off  
informal pages. Only the accurate  
held in Form's focus speaks. Else  
is fugitive and sad, come home with diseases.  
Sooner or later one leaves one's house.  
The monk chooses the sooner of the later  
the rainy season catches him serene  
winter lets him test the serenity of busy roads—  
a market is all learning.

12 June 1994

## **a woman named revenge is getting married**

Who is the priest who'll hold her vows  
to what strange husband? I see in the papers  
a woman named Revenge is getting married,  
a sunken priest and a decorated groom  
lead the bride, she holds a knife or scalpel  
I can't tell, the groom keeps changing faces,  
you see strange things in the papers,  
a scalpel walks, an island takes its vows  
and sinks them, isn't the sea itself  
the first of its own victims, drowned  
in its heaving, water in water spent  
until we call it marriage since no one listens?

14 June 1994

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There is a kind of order known as sky  
through which our tourist cultures move, uneasy  
at the silence they provoke, that all  
our chatter never turns to speech.

When things are dark enough you see them—  
there is some certainty, some home  
and a mango in a basket. Philosophy,  
trying to account for things, should strive  
to take note of them instead, and be content  
in this vast striving to attend.  
Who is left to name the pieces of the world?

I say a rose on a table, cat on a windowsill,  
mango in a basket, a million people wake  
and go to work, a street sullied with sunlight.  
But these are general observations,  
consequences it is true of what is seen and  
what is known, but not this cat. This cat.  
This house where no one wakes. Thorns  
in the water glass beneath the roses. Pain  
that capital city where all the information is.

14 June 1994, Boston