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Giving where there's wish— a needy
carriage of the mind (beak open,
dark wings fluffed a little back)
brings one through the endless museum.

Theory: when I have seen every single thing
and all the possible array of things
then seeing will have no object but itself
and I will see the seer plain.

This takes a long time. (Three
measureless kalpas just to get started.)
An alternative is to exhaust
the faculty before its objects

by ceaseless stimulation
(television, hockey, art).
Whatever's quick. The blinded mind
heals in its own wounded dark.

A danger: the flowers of midnight
are poisonous to most. Unseen
they yield a philosophic aroma
of articulate apathy. Not good.

Maybe outside the museum of the seeable
there is a city sprawled in Ordinary Light,
fresh and accidental, free of the stale freshnesses of art,
free of propaganda. Suppose cars, cats, pagodas, diners,

people always have to eat (Greek philosophy).
Then see what happens. Only what happens.
Even if it's just some ink drying slow in rainlight,
you get to go with it as it goes,

go with the gleam where the gleam goes.

8 July 1994

THE TOUCH OF US

The woods are wet
from hammer rain
old men think
of boys again

it is a classical
permission
to confuse the edge
of this with that

that soft skin on
these ripe
intuitions
until I am

the sense of touch
never grows old
we are classmates still
of rain and wind.

9 July 1994

THE GEOLOGIST

There is always an again in these things
the somber coruscations of some mineral
you dragged up —felt like sucked—
from a subterranean gallery only you
and the Nagas know —something with the chunk
and sheen and crack of obsidian but red in it
and some translucent thing like the skin
of a dead child — it doesn't matter
about the flesh but I need the name, my machine
depends on merchandise, blessed inventory!
things having names for themselves—
where else would evening be, and that star
you posited over the Malibu horizon where svelte
intelligences laid down their lives
in surf — dreaming the long dull satisfying
dreams that pills give you, like double features
with cartoons and endless coming attractions
for what came and went and here you are,
sprawled in water rush and trembling with ideas.
You told me about it. You dug up the stone
if stone it was. You talked in Mexican
to the backhoe operator, you promised all the things
people promise on their way to a new thing.
There is nothing for me but to go on
believing you. Let's just agree it wasn't a stone.
How could she have been. Just tell me what it was.
It would give me a curious satisfaction.

9 July 1994

EXCLAMATIONS

The things we ask for! Geology!
Named places! Serenades!

Sometimes I think Brahms had the right idea:
put all the notes down, leave them humming
and walk away. The impenetrable
shadows of Brahms!

10 July 1994

A butterfly trying to get into the air conditioner
over and over, for an hour
or more, who's counting, a butterfly
somber gold and autumn trying
to dance into the hot air outlet, dance
around the mouth of mother, Fire.

Not fire. Heat and cold, wet and dry,
it dances round the hot and wet.
A word trying to get back into the mouth.
I also have been spoken. The breath of us
goes the same way to sea. A butterfly
trying to be me.

10 July 1994

YOUR DEAR CHILD

for Barbara, for Dashiell.

I have been thinking of him,
about this blithe impostor
who comes into the room
pretending to be a stranger.

But you have always known him.
He was there in the wings
whenever you talked with a friend.
He was there in the wind.

There was a night in Oakland
when I heard him in the fire
in your fireplace, talking calmly
in the strange verb system of

the other world. And now he's here
the way the faucet is in the sink
and the palm tree in the yard
rattles in the evening breeze.

Blue. Children make me sad

I think because they are always
arriving. And I'm still here,
stubbornly wrong. This son

of yours makes me happy though,
because he has been always here
but is new as the next moment is
when you are quietly waiting.

I suppose he is in the business
of making you pay attention—
what more could anybody give?
I suppose his name is Irish

and means to move the way
the sun does around the earth,
east to west, mysterious and natural.
I suppose he has told you all this already.

10 July 1994

that apparition
feeds me . a bird's worth
light slung through trees the early day
unbothered by reaction that poltroon feeling

finch on a north perch
mulberry-gorgeted guessed out of sky
by simplest need
we correlate
harassing seed.

11 July 1994

Rebuttal of this strange man
a portager who slept in his canot
until the birchbark peeled around him

—white writing in the dark...
hopeless currency of vanished states...

the surgery is waiting for the man
slipping the skin off becoming something new
a memory disguised as a man

man I thought when I looked in the mirror
not without godliness womanly too
the way the eyes meet the eyes fearlessly

with an openness built out of layers of fear
hurt till transparency.

11 July 1994

SCHOENBERG

Something happened to Schoenberg.
I don't know what it was, a bitterness
at not being better, good as he was,

or something different, a break
in the heart of hope, that music'd mean
the way some used to, or it did, his,

before some lostness or some passage
into the bleak. Or he was wise
beyond anything I know how to grasp, a hope

in the break itself. Music
no one can hear. The emptying
of love, which always tells a story,

love is a story,
always hurries to her.
With something to tell,

even the solemn lies of Liszt, the pale
sugary truths of Saint Saens.
Something happened to this man

who would not tell.
Something about telling. His last
works build out from a push

not to be music but be word.
Speaksong. Telltale. *A Survivor*
from Warsaw. Napoleon Bonaparte.

And at the end: "word, word, word I lack!"

11 JULY 1994

AT THE TEMPLE OF VESTA

Sequins on Grecians. A slur of breath in ear says *love you*.
Abandoned on the porches of queen night — a foreign
farmer, *nauta*, 'a sailor,' feminine in form masculine in
meaning, what is meaning, macho ode, pediment of Vesta's temple.

Keep your sensations pure. In virgin sensuality
endure. Shadow of water. Pass sunlight through a lucid pitcher
and these simmering auroras on the table cloth refracted
are water's shade detected, a plume of color lewdly hinted.

Keep pure, pure against the thick from joining, seek
the seem among the frantic is'es. Porch of your temple also,
the lap of exile. Art makes so much of the accidents
of light, we need Vesta to teach the unchanged light inside,

the inner 'hearth' or *focus*. Round it build your round house.
Purity of feeling, feeling living on itself without predation,
without the false consolations of discourse. Then feeling thinks.
Pure interchange of function in the organ. This simmering theory.

Why the sign of purity is fire. Theoria means seeing. Theory
of beholding. Without holding. Goddess of letting go.
Hestia. Maiden meditation means to let thinking flow
and not go with what it shows. In the temple of the fire

light without residue. Or water is the ash of air,
shadow's shadow. How dare be dream that be not me,
or I not present to my mind's debauches? Live in joy
to touch beneath the touch. Behold,

we will take under the whole world! Till be
is no more than to be seen, and color is a habit of inside.
Be simple in not following. No virgin goes with
anyone one. A virgin is not led.

12 July 1994

the girl from Ipanema
the confusions

the sundering sunlight pours down the coast
one hides from what one knows

the occasion is rancid in the heat
touch me I claimed

but it was midnight

the thieves moved like oil through the hotel
and I was naked

steak-frites in the Place République
the damages my dear were splendidly Brazilian

you didn't believe me though I was in your lap

telling you the only
story I ever knew.

12 July 1994

H E A T

Metal hot by nature
like a hen's egg
like the oil inside the rock
a dormancy

then on its paws
a woodchuck sleeping
by the house wall
we are tenants of it

likewise
mortgaged to the sun
the dependencies
the truancies

in all our rent
only willing on certain
hot night hot
afternoons to discharge

while in the lap of the book a word lies sleeping.

12 July 1994

MIDNIGHT CONFESSION

for E.R.

Shrive me. Sensibility, asking
for Givenness
like a kid in a dime store
with nine cents.

We are born strokeless
in need.
Warren Street in Hudson
flooded with sensual surmise—

though it kills them
these people
welcome experience.

Or was it me?
Elizabeth, is there a grace
left inside the Creed?
A way of holding the mind
free *into* things?
A bright remorse
that takes on my pain?

I think a Christian is a redeemer,
incarnate for no other reason.
Not to discuss Christ but to be him.

Do miracles me.

12 July 1994

A heron with legs let down
lumbers into the sky

we sign the sea with portents:
every thing seen.

Do you understand that no matter how
abstruse discourse becomes, how
far ambitious artists insist
on taking their stand from what is shared

the ski is simply there?
And all we see
is provident. This marches us.

We come home at last to an intimate world.
Show-off, be simple. Taste the bird-noise in the leaf.

13 July 1994

Gallivanting towards unspeakable recognitions
a mountaineer busy with scree
seeks the upper limit of the child's book of geography—
the crinkled pillowcase beside his fevered head
—since childhood is a long disease— the world is there
in folds and creases of the bed sheet, the ominous
thunderhead of the counterpane. My father told me and I knew it
straight arrow from his honest mouth. *This*
is the real world, the seen, the dwelled-in always,
not the map of all those accidental Portugals.

14 July 1994

HAPPY BIRTHDAY PIERRE

a shout from south
Annandale (under
the slopes of Cedar
Hill to the north
of the stream Met-
ambesen where it swerves
joycey as applejuice
to sluice the first
of all the falls
down to North River

whence it floweth
north by westering
to get to you
in far *Aubany*
surrounded by friends
and for one at
least moment your Son
that primary
clings to your forehead
uræus-style and
rides your shoulders

and Nicole is by
it is to be hoped
aiming comfits
at your mouth
the glad of birth
daying by day
and straying by night
into the volupté
of shadow-work

happy *l'an*
y vers "Air!"

14 July 1994

[Two Posters by RK from the Nineteen Sixties]

NOW

an oration of the flesh un
mediated COLOR in the co
lor of wheat space in
the broken cup the rock
with NO sparrows BE
ING there in the color of
wheat differenced in
the shield egypt in
your face your breath a
salt marsh with no
birds INCREDIBLE S
UBSTITUTION as an
object of meditation
a wheel the lights of the
city each light a WHEEL
as imperium no
more songs there is
no focus to that light
fire into fire no more
orations SERMO the
hollow grain wheat
in the tide the wheel
turns IS turned

2.

interminable

interruptions:

lyricism

is not a tonality

but a moral courage

I mean a color

These two texts are transcribed from flimsy posters I composed in the late 1960s. In Number 2, after a patch of beige to start at upper left, and beneath a carmine sun or moon upper right, each line was separated from the next by a tache of color: violet, lake, aqua, blue. The last nine was followed by a big checkmark in sandarac or burnt orange. (Found and copied on 14 July 1994)

