

8-1994

## augA1994

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## THE LACEMAKERS

Stroke the mark  
and strike obeisances  
where they simper  
grovelling to every tree or  
male confusion; do  
not abrogate your lace.

Toothwork of archeo-machine.  
Slowing going blind for eighty years  
the women of that other place,  
my mother every one of them.  
*This hand I art.*

Sanctuary. Even Sunday morning  
the little jet or crystal rosary meek  
barely clicking in the dappled hand  
in swoons of Blessed Mother consciousness  
until the Mass is finished  
and the sunlight is,  
brief again, outside and her dead child.

. . . .

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Bird cry and going through with.  
Not a great deal of animal  
to lumber through a yard. The slow  
grind of Tiger baseball pleased my mind,  
of weight and age like Dark Age palaces  
all mass and shadow — ache of chapel,  
dank baptistry, line drive, long of beard.  
All night we watched. We won.  
A number changed in light — a satisfaction —  
so in the desert of our lives  
some grains of sand shift across a visionary line.

1 August 1994



# the archer the intimate



Ten tastes to know the side of the mouth in  
nine starts to a star  
eight struts to a landing  
seven stippled by the rain & green: oak leaves all-resistant  
six toggles to turn me on  
five orchestras to tune you  
four alpenstocks to hike a cliff  
three ratchets to advance your cause  
two shirts to share  
one noon to notice & be us

I will be purple if you stem.

1 August 1994

## ELEMENTS MORE THAN SUPPOSED

As if underneath the practical veneer that keeps the milk out  
the sprucewood of your dinette table is waiting for the high command  
of all that is matterly to decide: it is all right for the table  
to drink milk. It is permitted for things to mean whatever they like  
to us and we to them. Doorbells have an archaic flavor now—  
no one comes. The footsteps on the porch belong to ghosts  
tired of waiting for us under the wind-warped pine over Yaquina.  
Why do we make everything wait? Why have we driven so far  
to get away from pleasures we embraced in California? Oregon?  
And who was the car? Carrot shaped things dangle in a neuter wind.

2 August 1994

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Inkstain my artifice. Grow kindly where you can  
leaf upon door sill, moss on roof shingle till  
the old lych gate by the graveyard's covered deep to make  
an underworld in sunlight and we guess where we go.

I know you and your friends suppose that moss  
has nothing more to tell us, and death is just decor.  
But I live these bones. Time is my decay  
and argues volubly with all of us, that old man on a park bench

who won't let you get away. Be responsible to the wind,  
noise, spaces in your head, the inner weather.  
Not emotions, those acquired constructs, but the root  
feel of things inside you, silk or milk or running water. Or wind.

Begin with the feel of wind between your skull and your sense.  
What empathy we ask of one another with these little marks  
(words, theories, measures) and so little with our own condition,  
the feel of space inside our spaces, the indoor rain, the private night.

2 August 1994

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Tool for what is needed (a day to keep silence)  
we are together in the tiny hope—but that's  
too big— I have to walk full faithful into dawn  
past all the incaminentos of West Third Street,  
centripetal babes with their sallow moods  
hugging themselves as if the sight of them would kill,  
did kill me, entertainment our severe disease  
from which so few are spared, the merry plague.  
And I'm not just talking time-waste and morality—  
I mean the moon has set in that glisten and no sun comes.  
I mean there's nothing but the glisten where the skin once was  
—in love with personages we can never touch, Elvis alive  
and living in my shoe, a sense of presence peddled  
to people who once upon a time are here. Go  
where others have seen his shadow too. Misspell the wise.

3 August 1994

## MOUNTAIN

Is everybody back yet from Ladakh from Ispahan from green places  
Where a red mind's made? Is everybody purple? In the shale  
Of Mohonk, in the moss on shale, and ferns, and bright orange  
mushrooms

Growing through the moss, in the lake wind nuzzling at the little boat,  
In the nine-inch slender black fish two barechested brawny rich men  
Caught between them, in the squealing struggle for its life in sun,  
In the two dawn-spotted fairy yearling fauns we saw at peace  
On stilt legs at evening, listening to everything we had to say,  
Safe in the peace of listening, and in the coarse collapsed white  
Huge lilies corpse lilies of datura growing among meek pink  
begonias,

In shaggy gazebos and the hope of heaven, what did I hear?  
I heard a man walking on the mountain. I saw his broad feet  
Skirt mud puddles and step firm on rock fall, I saw him go.  
What do I know? I know he has gone before us and beside us  
Three thousand years, and that's just since lunch. Each thing we see  
Is not a thing. Or as a thing all meek and actual it speaks & is a guide.  
A guide moves among the guides like breath through the alphabet  
Saying and blessing and making clear what kind of glacier left us  
here.

4 August 1994



## ON THE DAY 11-DEATH

A day to measure the skull  
a day of ink. An owl or a hawk  
—who are you? —  
swooped between our doors.

Rain spatter in hot sun haze.  
Can I call you yet?  
You are pigeon. Axle. You are angle.  
You made the geometry I just bend.  
I want to tie light to the tree

*(a tree is upside down)*

and make it breed with shadow  
and from that savage union come  
a race of artful wounds to wake the mind.  
Two dozen finches sound like that  
around a little seed.

Then tied to the light  
the shade submits to my caress—  
we belong to being seen, we are  
but are dependent.

No free lunch in America, a ball of twine  
rolls big across the desert,  
Ariadne rolling up the world.  
The evidence (o Christ! the sweet evidence!)  
is swept away. Even the rocks shimmer  
unstable with becoming.

It is alive but you can't  
predict, can only love it.  
Whatever else it is the skull is hard,  
one bone among so many friends.

4 August 1994

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Tired of these mistakes—  
a rose trellis a net of shadows he trips over  
yet again the paltry identity he sensed inside and all those others  
act as if he were really there. Mosquitoes bite. A discomfort arises  
from misunderstanding, two protein systems ill at ease, a self claiming  
sovereignty over all its skin, a little stupid war. He scratches his  
    ankle,  
the insect dies or flies. This brief awareness of our common life is  
    gone,  
where do they go, the ones that touch us once? O careless love  
that made the world so large. Or now your plangent heart  
    accelerates—  
this is the hour before breakfast. There is no weather.  
There are no feelings yet.

5 August 1994

## A SIGNATURE

Be me. Be me in your night time  
tying you to your bed.  
Untying your dead.  
There is nothing  
silk or leather here  
there is going.

Rain walks.  
Let the precious differences  
fall, there  
where there is nothing  
but leaves we don't have to eat.

5 August 1994

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Raging almost, as if responsibility  
led him to this bone beside his road,  
he found a song. Not derived from *sangita*  
(*sam+gita*) in Sanskrit. Not coming  
but just lying there, a bone.

Bones are never there before. Ever  
abstract from some familiar  
opportunity, one that could love you,  
animal. A bone, a telephone.  
Evidence of a palpable design.

But does that love you? Does that  
eat ice cream all the way up Laurel  
wondering if that itch on the waist  
is a tick and if so of what kind? What kind  
is anything? I keep asking,

like an Old Slavonic liturgy, the repetitions  
are musical, wearying, sacred.  
Hear me, I caterwaul. You also are a mouth,  
the itch is spreading. There is a bland  
inevidence around my skin

called clothes or holy mist or something  
wrong with the transmission.  
Your hard disk has fleas. Your sunglasses  
don't work on the moon. Help me,  
I have been trying to touch you all my life

and all you ever are is my life.  
You can't even hear me, having no  
ears except mine. Even your bones  
are common. This bundle of them  
held loosely, towards you, my hand.

6 August 1994

## NOISES OFF

The cicadas or some chirruping recollection  
silenced in the cold night.

Something

comes to me there.

It is an owl cry or a woman passing  
in a car filled with radios and a man sleeping.

Everything in her control. The liberties  
were a place where night was exemplary  
for interactive opportunities. A dullard like me  
could hope for no quarter there,

thrust and borrow, song and liturgy  
of compound lust. Be anything.  
Just be. I walk my way  
and they walk with me, the friends, the sequences.  
Like stars or bishops or blue cats

stalking out of the rain with a man in their mouths.  
Long ago I got all the sizes wrong.  
But this is pleasure, this is the noxious  
fume of appetite that smiles my skin.  
Nobody likes somebody who likes everybody.  
That is my glory, the narrow yen. The happy few.

6 August 1994

## HOLDING ONWARD

ask **animated** energy to hold  
a poem  
not together but going

the way a body poised motionless in doorways  
is strong with going,

hold it to one road  
not coherence (it must be moving)

a road but a single road.

6 August 1994

## FROM AN EARLY 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TEXTBOOK

There is nothing more modern than the moon.  
Prove it. A country is made up of lakes,  
a marriage of reactions, a boat of resin,  
a book of pleas. A rock is certainly mysterious—  
there is no reason it should be so hard,  
everything is going somewhere all the time.

Even if I'm not in France this summer, we  
feel the evening breezes move. Waft. Weft.  
Butterfly. Name me: I sit deep in your constitution  
like make-up on a model's cleavage. Serene,  
incompetent, ever true. I'm wild about you.

Can't you give me more to go on? Cool evening evening  
go out to dinner, never wear a hat? Getting warmer.  
Are you milk? Or cream? Or Cadillac? A smut of soot  
fallen in winter on a soft pale cheek? A chasm?  
Nearest to a chasm. Is that an answer or a fruit  
or your location? I live there. It is rare and real,  
it happens now. I think I know you,  
your eyes are heavy and your hands are light.

### *Questions for Discussion:*

1. How many voices are to be heard in this poem? How many appear to embody the feelings of the author?
2. What kind of person would think that things had the constituents mentioned in lines 2 -4? Are you such a person?
3. Why shouldn't hard things (line 6) go places?
4. In line 7, where is the speaker in fact? Is the imagery in the poem (before this? After this?) clues to his (her) identity?
5. Things seem to be in or on other things a lot in this poem (See lines 11, 15-17). What has this to do with the final image in the poem? Does that image resolve anything? What?
6. Who says "I think I know you," and what does she (he) mean? Who are you?

7 AUGUST 1994

## THE HOLY SACRIFICE

*Asgard* they taught us to say it where the  
gods lived at least the gods they taught us to praise  
and left to Friday the other gods the ones  
we needed to meet in the singleness of dream  
where I could kiss the limbs of the least of them  
and she was more powerful than any Day.

Why don't they teach us these things? Why don't they tell  
about The Other Gods, the ones that love us  
with intricate maneuvers and the dark?  
Is it they want us to learn them ourselves in the street  
like sex and music and poetry, the smartass answers  
that wreck our lives, but give us a life to wreck,

wreck, offer to *them*, the uncanny beauty of them  
as she saunters in anybody's clothes through the slip  
of moonlight I guessed from the constellation Leo  
to be seen outside my house last night, the actual,  
I saw before bedtime and then saw nothing more?

8 August 1994



## THE GARDEN ASIDE THE HOLY TOWN

I might have been an impostor too.  
To speak is generous  
but silence gives.

So much of life is waiting  
for the water to boil  
and how soon the coffee gets cold  
he said,

                    bakers  
lost in their dozens,  
the moon blind-siding us  
then shrinking back.

It is dark of her now,  
no answer. *Der besetzte  
Mond*, I called alas, the wine  
pinkled in the golden stirrup when  
a chevalier in haughtiness  
rode through the bride's  
kitchen — marry me  
is more than meaning—

an opera  
(uproar) for an hour,  
wild bee stings of sun  
through shallow curtains,  
kiss me.

                    Long afternoon of lick.

I called but the moon was busy  
—interval and paraphrase—  
so that: the drunk rode into the saloon,  
was reminding me of how it was to ride  
into sunset Corbenic at last,  
something large in something suddenly made small,  
the grail nearby, a girl laughing  
nearby out of sight

and every order of inference  
cast aside, and just this touch  
my whole philosophy.

Nothing buzzing in the quiet  
but sacred pervasion,  
It in Everything a-sudden,  
barflies falling off their stools  
and suddenly the gold was there,  
a shimmer walking through the garden  
where there should be no light,

a shimmer in near woods  
the shape was nothing  
but light but light  
was walking,  
the three students saw it,  
held their ground and shivered,  
kept asking questions of the leaves.

Tell me what happened in this place.  
It all is here.  
The grail is everywhen you mind.

9 August 1994

## T A G E S F R A G E

A day is queer.  
Everything fits  
inside a day.  
Why *does* K  
have a sore  
ride on her bike  
to what *is* work?

Of course everything.  
Become a question  
if you want to please  
with sinuous  
(serious) intent.  
Of course everything  
becomes. A crow quill  
on the lawn, a tall  
priest at compline  
robing and a word said green.

They lay a road.  
Birds consume.  
Our business is answering  
in strict time strictly  
a smile and *ohne Weiteres*.

Each thing  
has drunk the juices  
of each other.  
The siege of opposites  
is a blue season.  
Who wins?  
Maybe wind does.  
Birds on the roof.  
The habit of being.

10 August 1994

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My print, my fanciful leaf shadows.  
How the sky articulates.

Brother water, have you changed your sex?  
So many queens  
of so little territory, a man's frail heart,  
are you one, a queen, after all, carasoyn  
or undinë, wave person, key made for every lock, the contour  
found?

And once found, caressed in each detail  
until the door bursts into speech?

The door of water.  
Syllogism, water's bones,  
a dog is barking, a clunk of garnet sitting on the desk, be easy.  
A calm comes.  
Far away, on bicycles (*travel wheels* they call them in that land)  
people coast along a shallow sea.

This delicate dance  
depends on  
but does not need  
me. The paradox, the oars  
of a dory swung behind the yacht  
clatter in the empty hull of it,  
a sound like breakfast.

Ambient alertness saves.  
Raise a flag  
charged with her qualities  
(a red key on a yellow field)  
and still not be sure.  
So much water even in the least of you.

10 August 1994

