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There are fewer sycamores in a town where demons live.
Towns like that get white some other way.
“Heal my hand,” you hear them saying, or “Isn’t
The sea remarkable today” but never tell why.

Rolling the ashcans out on winter mornings, lugging
The ice blocks in. I was born on an earlier planet
With horses and zeppelins, with mustard plasters and veils
drooping over women’s faces — I tell you this so you don’t think

I get my strange powers from this world we share,
A world I forget deftly as it rolls into place dazed by our speed
In receiving it, our diffuse but adequate appetites.
I remember lust that seemed to rise from the desired body—

No way the world can stay dark when that sun comes up. No trees
Like eucalyptus, sycamores, birches can prosper
Where there is no natural desire. Such trees can’t grow
In magazines or courtrooms. Such trees persist

In growing out of us, dream time and touch me.

23 August 1994

CITY

Hairy innocents excuse each other in noisy parks.

23 August 1994

And nothing left to fear.
The siege of this little hill,
sound of a car crash in fog,
distant voices
full of terrified blaspheming.
How many names we call
to say our own!
Biscornu, the funny
shapes of things— a man
with a bag on his back
disappears up the hill in mist.

24 August 1994

Weren't we lovers once he
Said to the bee not the tree
His current mistress

Didn't we haunt olive shadows
Take trains to Chicago
Didn't we think

Together all night long and now
You have no time for me
All caught up as we are

In senseless love?

25 August 1994

CHO MÊ

I want to write a poem that does not take sides.

25 August 1994

Write a poem that's not about a squirrel,
Write a poem that's not about a close relative deceased or dying,
Write a poem not describing anybody playing music old or new
Write a poem with no song but itself
Write a poem with no brand names
no clothing his jeans her underwear
no diseases no guitars no politicians
no sidewalks and no subways no cigarettes
no swans no pine trees no snakes
no balloons no candy no clowns no canoes
Write a poem with no reference to language or poetry or God
Write a poem with no drugs no neon no birthday cake
Write a poem with no love no dream no leprosy
no dawn moon rose religion
Write a poem with no candles no horses no rain
no tears no windows no rivers no red wine
Write me this wonderful poem
no comparisons no highways no names.

25 August 1994

Taking my stand:
leave people alone
to pray and think and play.
What politics
will further this?

26 August 1994

Their whimsies undo them,
give them away as fops, the pool
shimmer of their eyes forever
anxious for some Next Thing

and all their poor actual fishes
starved for nurturing.
We are thought.
It never happened.

The dream transpires as the day,
breathed by common language,
that god among us. Oaks
overhear us and go to sleep.

26 August 1994

What does she look like
the one who holds our
whole house in her hand?

“We are protected”
is the thing we know of her
blue cloud over night roof

a hurry in empty doors.

26 August 1994

CLIVIA

The clivia is blossoming. Is it the cold spell in mid-August and the warmth come back? Dryness a week while we were gone or. Who knows the roots of what happens? Orange amaryllis-like flowers, buds, one of half a dozen on the pale stem already opening. Who can further what happens?

27 August 1994

SHOWING IS NOT REVEALING

Revealing is not showing. What is the other difference a flower knows, so that it can open in light's slow dance revealing, open slow and then be all open and be there, necessarily, revealing what it is to be there beholding?

Flamenco dancers whirl their skirts up and show the pale of thigh, the showing is an index of the ardor of their knowing movement so, their 'dance.' What can a dancer know? Something is shown, nothing is revealed,

the revelation waits inside what part of her does not move. When the stripper slow or smart unsays her clothes and shows and shows and shows, nothing is revealed except the opacity of sight itself. She cannot show herself.

These are the operative definitions:
Showing is offering what I [think I] am.
Revealing is offering what I'm not. Or what is not me.

27 August 1994

As much because of one as other
a bratchet yelping for her dog
or man his master, who are we fooling,

we carry the mourning with us
and every orgasm spits in the face of the dead,
the consoling weirdness of the other's body by me

a touch at four a.m. either side of the fundamental gap.

28 August 1994

But it's not remembering. It's prose
run off by the yard, lust weaves it
in his silly workshop lit with pine torches

that have burned —resin flame to resin flame—
uninterrupted for two thousand years.
Their flickering we hear is the metronome

sets us working to its meters. Measures. Meters,
mothers, maids, marriages. The click of fire,
breath of water and one more fiction pulls

a gasping soul into brief cognizance, this swamp
society, bath house, sweet earth. The one who told me
held my arm with both her arms close to her and I followed.

28 August 1994

I smell like a battleship steaming up the Narrows
but the clivia is blooming at summer's end,
six surprising trumpets I can see and morning's
cool. It would be worth it to be wealthy
on a to like day, cast gold shimmers
in wet grass, send food to starving countries
and give orders to your shirt collar — the world
is always listening. Listen, I got it wrong,

I am a carrion cartoon, a king in mufti, someone you need.
Stagy presences of our public day mill around my mind—
gawkward, convinced only of my magnitude
but not as what, when what, for what, glorious turpentine
to medium some intenser color, who are you?
That's why a liquid thing men give, not the tiny jewel itself
so often slipped whole through the pores of the mind.

29 August 1994

You can tell because apples on the tree and deer are busy,
dogs carry dead things in their mouths for us,
we carry things in our mouths and call them words

the hunt is up, hurry. What is under is tired of talking.
It's the wind's turn now, that ardent pilgrim
who finds the holy in us and comes round. Be glad

with me in this last whimsy, more coffee than calvados,
but at least when you try to study the quick light
on the horizon or above the tree's dark lacework

eyelids will not quiver closed. As mine do. You will see
and there will be nothing to say. Welcome to the earth
where everything has been said, nothing heard, the club of silence.

30 August 1994

Drunk with exile, we rave in public, these poor
common words exploding like terrified
birds burst from the trap of our bodies,

speaking. Maddened by privacy. Self-protection,
doubt. The town meeting
where there is no town, Forum
where there is no Rome, leave me alone
until I need you. Then be wise.

31 August 1994

A door
is more
than you give it
credit for

a door is
solution
mercury
darkening

the back of the
world to show
your face

whoever you are
a door
is everyone.

31 August 1994

THE ONLY HOUSE

As if the beam we called the tree then fell
and all the times enraptured of our presence
fell too and down the staircase of the years
nothing we could recognize keeps calling

calling until all we have to live inside is
that very call the sound of it the summary
information of our busy blood the courses
habiting our heads the sounds of me

and that is all. We live in falling.

31 August 1994