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FEBRUARIVS

Colors
the travellers
are like to see

however skillful
they may be
the wind is free

with their skin
their clothes
its flags

tatters
of their precious
identities.

The animal
it means
to be me

shivers — how
to hide
from everywhere?

1 February 1993

HOLDING TO THE MARGIN

for Charlotte

Ten degrees the morning's hard.
How the cold moves
windless to declare. Warming the glass.
Changing — even the hardest
goes through its transforming.
Who is it. We walk by rights
only along the edge of this
planet of revenuers and remorse.
Some of us walk. Green gurneys
carry my friends to the living morgue.
Mushrooms in their Pennsylvania caves,

things hiding everywhere. A weird
as long as you are. Try escaping
into another language — in the nasal
sloshing of Basque you'll find your bisaïeule
for sure, your mother's mother's mother's mouth—
dragons understand it and come to heel.
Or be your uncle and wear snug collars
clothes are just another language
money helps to speak.
And my fine body full of thrust and feeling.

Don't tell me the roses are waiting—
I have no business with what's to come.
What is in the seed doesn't speak
except the wicked dialect of time.
Whereas I beginningless.

2.
A bridge. That what it is,
give me a big bridge, a green one
over to Rockaway, or that long bow

bent over whimpering Humber.
Take me to the sea
or to the North. These
are my conditions.

Just a bridge with a troll beneath it,
three stones piled up will do
to make a gateway for the absolute light
to enter this careless world without end
—what Stonehenge did or any trilithon
proposes, to trap the light
and make it circulate ever intensifying
as it whirls through the gate.

3.
Night on the Wiltshire plain when photons rest.
Amen. The trap. Well a bridge is like that
trapping not the rays but the meanings of light
reflected and reenacted by the water's grimace
(all the emotion we call the heart, *face of the sea*)
down there where already this morning
the sheet ice forms and mutes the sun dapple.

Well a bridge is like that, blue light
seen only in the dark below the day
each brave soldier marches towards it, bion
energy lament for all lost loves
at least he smiled at lust's untimely satisfaction
messaging to this world I am yes your fellow
I am a man you are another of me.

4.
Only in the shell of gloom beneath the bridge
is that light seen — a light to see, tu sais,
not one to see by or be seen — turrets of Owen's house,
myth of Welsh mountains you speak my mind
the smoke of his faithful old indulgence filters up.

This is the Holy Land, this sauntering palestine

the holy ground you're standing on
rubbing your thighs to keep the Union warm.
Repair my lights and send me to the night time, war
is a broken constellation. The man on the hurdle
carried to the gibbet. Who heaps the grain so high
not even gods still see her merry wicked face?

1 February 1993

for Charlotte

At two degrees the rhododendron leaves are quilled
tight as they ever get. This is the measure.
How many of my ever would I still?

A measure. What music proposes is not,
and not like this a distraction. It is
(time is, and harmony the more so, measure
by measure) an alternative
obsession, a fugue from which you never come home.

Time changes while you dance. Take yesterday—
voluptuous in white knee socks a blaze of skin
up to the mini-hem a dancer offered
movements into silence as a sign of music.
Television is a kind of fuguing if you flick it

per canonem what you see as you pass by.
All drained of power, quick images in casual review.
Choose me, for I can prompt desire in the unlikeliest,
find splendors in murky stillness. Suburb Sunday
pause again a turn of feather against the penman
I dream an art invisible to prose.

Music no one has to hear. For I can stir.
On placid water striving to remember
ardently what you never knew.
And that is the end of the news.

2 February 1993

THE COURSE OF IT

What we would call its flow if it were fluent. It is not liquid
But it moves. It is more like a meadow than a road
More like a road than a woods. Its notation is primitive,
Being us. Yet not without complexity.
Something old and worn. An interval of peace
By which we take music. To be meant is to be listening.
Eventually everybody. *Jouissance* is always just
One millimeter beyond the edge of the specific. The rim.
Lying in wait for one's own life — who lived me so far?
In the Spartan version, a man from early boyhood's trained
To lust and find lust inside the precincts of his body
And its energetic striving. While Athens taught otherhood.
I want the *divic* vision if there's such a word, god-battle
Against the shadows false self throws against some decent wall.
A world of objects needing to be freed. "I tell you, Kunga,
If one of these doubting ones were to just toss one
Flower in the sky to offer to the Precious Ones, such a person
Would be already on the boundary of being there."
As young as a flower ever is, as young as the sky.

2 February 1993

THE APPROXIMATE

Then you go back and find it twenty not eighteen
not the elm tree you remember but the glass
yellow-faceted or faced at least such that a sound
you suppose is emitted which deters dogs of all kinds
from this little capsule in your head. Is a hawk
for you? A flask with light in it. The shadow
of a living thing. This geranium
my hand — is it different from inanimate?
If not, is light what kills? If not, is all
substance rapt in some measure of living
not different from being? *Esse percipi?* And we
invent a difference, a weird enterprise called “to be”
as against to be alive? What a harrow!
I told you we're better off not thinking—

Or let the language think for us.
Even if it's wrong
it's been wrong long enough for us to be
immune to its insolent inferences,
a Self-Instructor for Use in the Home.

3 February 1993

RAPTOR CENTER

for Charlotte

must be
if a place
then one in the heart
a hard one
waiting
at the top

heart sky
for a plummeting
to seize

the word
means grabber
we suppose
it was never
different

from the huge
where I am
to find that one
small enterprise
that feeds me
and to it
I fall

this is the whole
history
this is broken wing
and ruined paw
this is city wall
a rusty lung
remembering to praise

the consort
of particulars
from which each maid
is married to her quality

each boy enlisted
in the infantry of desire
kept ignorant

leave the mind
to her
leave thinking

she who knows the earth
understands the sky

go sleep in action
and leave heaven to her

but she is fierce
our hawkmother
will not let
such obsequious brutalities
make trivial at last
the fine distinction
of our common mind

mind's a blue flower
in the blue sky
she falls
the blessed of her the
mother of her
falls from the top of it
straight to the core of it

by which
in feeling
we wake
to thinking

hawk-holy
mother of
clemency
queen of con-
sequences
searching the fact
we stumble in

blood-sweet
her tumbling
chute from the light

into this single
paralyzed meat

till we hood her
(how?) by mercy
and turn us
commonly
(close your eyes)
into the light
from which she fell.

3 February 1993

THE FORM

for Charlotte

Smaller grow the days — the light increases
but the power of the day (the shell light ripens in)
diminishes until the day cracks open and soon
be nothing but spring and not a thought in our head
(thought lives by day, is born from day)
(dream stems from light). (Dream is light
remembering itself inside the sleeping body.)

4 February 1993

DEL LETTO ARCANO DELLA DIVINA
IXOTTA

—*Canto LXXII*

So comforted,
 wrapped as we are
 to be thrall of every experience,

doucely, our teacher,
 whence my knuckles raw,
Nicene Creed and the hard ruler,
rosary beads a-whirling

among the remarkable manners of the Lombards
whose equal-handed kingdom poured from Spain to Denmark

and in her bed,
 the secret bed of the divine Isolda,
 she endures our uncertainty
 of her lucidity,
 an identity
clearest marble cannot match,
 and not by name alone
her umber,
 her reputation
being beauty
 is divina just diva, celebrated
 rich and famosa, formosa,
well-favored,
 like the blue dust of Leningrad
sifting onto still canals
 all the white night long,

what could be more secret than water
 knows its way everywhere,
 and she in her down quilt, slumberous,
a sort of opera of sheer relaxing
 after the rare rimes of her favorite poet
 pounced nell' orgasmo,

I want to know her, who being divine is both

unknowable and of highest title to be known,
strive to that knowledge, bed feathers, strive
to that warmth insufflated with her drowsy purr,

this is a fit object of knowledge,

shebza, thing to be known,

but knowing
is a hard habit, mistress,
as when the priest in the confessional
with his hoarse old whisperbellow
admonisheth his penitent to
stand on the bell-tower of this very church,
istessa chiesa,

and shake out like her wedding sheets the ripped
pillow of her bed
until the air is full of down and feathers then

go down to the plaza and recapture every one—
then she will be forgiven for her slanders

spread of this most admirable sleeper.

4 February 1993

Distrust the image.
Light?
Light is integument

only,
but of what meat?
What ancient physics

gives it this power
to stand still?
Who is my skin?

Who is the sky?

4 February 1993

I hope they don't go and start another war.
If they do I'll have to trot out all my old platitudes
my half-dreamt half-baked ideas on life and death.

And I don't know anything about
life and death. A poet knows
nothing of such words, a poet knows
the smell of pine trees on a maybe morning
the taste of salt but how to say it

light a late sun throws slap against an old brick wall.
If that's any kind of knowing.
Or sometimes a poet knows the moon
or some other place I have never been.

4 February 1993

Time to count the syllables again
to see if any got stolen while I slept
cheated the gods again and woke
alive in a numerable universe

tidal real estate hectares of Bosnia
examine for starters the veins
on the back of my hand (talk
about syllables!) those baby blue

snakes that write my initial
big over the left carpals
all my life how could I forget
could have been Kafka or Korzenowski

where is my Africa after all this
I am irritated with you Bialy
that you visit four republics in one
sennight sort of by air.

5 February 1993

The timing again
 (run out of time
 as the doctor

ran out of language)
 “the time, the
 time!” and like everything

built of numbers
 is corruptible
 breaks in my fingers

this so-called now.

6 February 1993

What does anything try to say?

The shape of another person
 strange huge permanent excitement
 of what is not me.

This is as much about love
as language needs to know.

7 February 1993

THE GREAT ADVENTURE

Break the flag see summer through it
sky over wartime. Places change their meanings
Baghdad was our heart nest once. An accent
spilled of moonlight. A sweater with curious
pattern wears a man —small fish in zigzag
weave my doubts something like a diamond
the way you see it as the bottom of a leather bag
a hematologist with a ribbon in her hair.

7 February 1993

THE TRADITION

The coming of the ink into the nib
calls a great friend from his rare sleep
(he sleeps in me but wakes in you)
to speak my mind. A word flows.

I mean, Friedrich, a word is what flows.
And later still is fluent among men.
Women hear that streaming. Women understand
—more intelligent and more energy, they endure
our mouthing. Mumbling their lines in our lips
trying to say what we heard them being.

8 February 1993

EPONA

Robust inside the shell of sound
a meaning fancies itself frail.
The tankers wallow down the straits
participate in Caucasus by bird
—evaginated membrane strewn from star to star—
muscle-cosm, leap of faith
by the stallion of the mind
though god here's Mare.

8 February 1993

Counting from the margin
marching comes matter.
A dialogue setting forth
the true nature of worlds.

Systems, three million
million of them
discoverable to our senses so
and the square of that
invisible—all within this
local cosmos alone.

Dogs bark for company,
we study the stars,
moon foundry, tears
this glue that holds the wood
together ever in the tree.

Perceiving enlivens objects.
The energy that is paid
("attention") makes the wood.
Stone. Plastic. Iron. Bone.

8 February 1993

THE HOUR

Drinking self-knowledge
sullenly by juke box lit
the elbow every hour
heavier until the final trump

that spills the street
into your mind.
Time is to go home in
if you can find the way

too bright the sidewalks
too straight the lines
the cars are strung on
out of sight pursued

by red tail lights
the sign of what you know.
To follow without hope.
To get there without

being there.

8 February 1993
remembering