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ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR THE  
COCK SPREADS ITS WINGS IN SILENCE

*for Charlotte*

So much said this morning.  
Is it air that matters?

Is it music? Looking for a name  
or some other infamy a thousand years  
away from the hairs on my upper lip  
that want to brush against your cheek  
not even bothering to talk.

Snow plow woke me. Trying  
to make marmalade. People  
are trying to sleep. I love you  
better than weather.

22 February 1993

## FRAGMENTS OF THALES, 2

I hope you pay attention to *the day* Three Knife  
that *is speaking in us now*. In it now.

The etymologies of popular feelings  
*swept back like slush* to the side of the road  
defining it. You can't get from a going  
(a road) to a staying (house) without treading  
up to your ankles through it.

Or you could sit down in the slush and make that your home,  
the *slippery, intimate, accommodating*. Till your  
body heat melts it back to water again—  
emotion. **Θαλης**, the universal empowering  
condition. *Defining nothing, it touches everything*.

22 February 1993

## THINGS LOOK LIKE ONE ANOTHER

*for Charlotte*

Things look like one another. Portugal  
a shelf that runs around the room  
just above the picture rail: yellow plates  
with blue cocks on them. New Years Day.  
A starfish is a kind of textbook  
left open all night in the rain.

Who says me?

You are my author & delight, my shirt  
stained from your blizzards. White  
intaglio of chemistry. Visit  
a distant university, a Wheatstone bridge or arc  
over the dissimilar conditions.  
Ions. Relatives. Sparrowhawk on sycamore  
reading these faint obituaries in the snow.

The fallen. A cracked cup to give my friend.

22 February 1993

## HISTORY MEANS TO INVESTIGATE

Then the word speaks itself

because someone had a cup and a pencil  
drank tea and wrote letters  
ivory envelopes to hide  
the tender destinations

on their secret pilgrimage  
every day is

to live in moving

and let it seem  
only as if we took the way to Moscow

for example. What is written  
is hidden in the wood

that hides the stick of graphite  
we call "the pencil." Carandache.

The cup also was paper  
like the *Journal d'une autre fois*  
the queen was reading when someone  
sneaked in and saved her life.

The headline said **A KISS**  
**AGAINST SCARCITY** and then  
there was all this sudden magic

the dog howled and the moon relented.

In his shabby paper cup  
the good man's tea  
was strong and sweet  
was hot.

Scarcity  
is an unusual problem in her class,  
indifference in his.

Accuracy  
in ancient Sanskrit poetry  
had to do with a precise balance  
of syllables against the all-too-lucid  
propositions of that gushing mathematics  
they had in mind when they said *the gods*.

I don't know what do to now with  
the big pieces of night you left me  
along with the feel of your hip.

The light in your tired eyes.  
To investigate what will become of me.

To hold you in the crosshairs of the night  
like a moon trapped in the window.  
Somehow you will sleep in me tonight.

22 February 1993

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The cycle of Mexican days  
dependable  
no leap years no precessions to confuse  
this moment with mathematics

for these are Earth Days  
this lord's breakfast  
and this lady's sleep,

here now the dark star we walk on.

The Twenty Lords. The Thirteen Maidens.  
We are them all their children.

23 February 1993  
4 Cawuk

## THE BLENDING OF SANDS

*for Charlotte*

Sands,  
my Malibu

I burn a stick of incense  
in a cup of sand  
I brought from the Pacific,

can I put out of mind ever  
what ocean did  
and what that water said?

what ocean  
made me do

dog tracks in the surf quick washed  
into the unspeakable intimacy of the sea  
that never ends

I think of you sitting there on the headland  
on the grassy cliffs on the road to the west end  
studying the fall of cormorants towards the horizon

their wet wings shudder  
on the red stacks  
they always face into the wind  
you tell me

your bright eyes  
seeing  
always  
face into the wind

how an island  
keeps you chaste



no lover can speak so close to your heart's  
ear as this surf

magnet of my body  
alone in the sky  
among the surfers the celebrants of music the dogs

I set this brass bowl up  
with the sands of the Pacific in it  
to hold the ocean holy

and responsible for our minds

this bloody parcel  
of who I am  
against our island

Cuttyhunk Rapa Nui  
there be sands.

The blending of inhibitions  
produces a liberty,

no more free than geese  
actually against the winter sky

but seeming free  
and by their seeming  
keep alive the legend of liberty

until we hunger for it  
so when someone shows the way we  
rouse from torpor,  
follow. Thus Gosnold,

thus a world  
of liberal men and women  
woke these decades to a sudden gong—

o poor Church you beauty  
you logocentric thing  
gave up your gong your drum  
and when you silenced the tinkling brass  
you gave up with them  
your old wordless *praying in the mind of God* —  
where else would prayer ever work?

so the sea shows the way a little  
pray without words

pray in the mind of freedom pray in the sound of it the om of it.

24 February 1993

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*for Charlotte*

I will share with you  
everything  
now

even give you one of my two 1.50 markka Estonian stamps.  
—pale blue Baltic grey of starvation white of snow—  
I will make it my business  
to let you feel  
what it feels like to be me and see  
your thighs across the room

I will share this blue sky  
share  
my salt. My wood.

Strangely I began  
my being born.  
The four kinds  
of man I am,  
born of fire born of air born of water  
born of you  
I will share  
the splinters of my identity  
my flowerpot my broken promises  
(I broke them for you)

I was a morning  
I was a hurry  
in your horse  
—you had no horse but the sea—  
and it ran in you  
to meet me  
where I was a signpost at a crossroads

every fork of the road  
led to us  
now.

And I was a block of ice  
carved in the shape of a skull  
to adorn the blue banquet

a performance of *Rosamunde*  
by puppets, the music  
sung on seashells only  
tuned to ring

there is an analysis  
like an auto  
carries everything I mean  
far into  
some interesting looking forests  
I used to be,

pine, upright, mast-wood,  
I would squirm around on the grey felt seat  
to watch it dwindle  
behind my father's Pontiac  
chugging on into the eternal north.

24 February 1993

## CHARLOTTE CALLS FROM DARJEELING

Four degrees here but the weather  
changes.

There is an aspersion  
of common light,  
abhisheka of the Ordinary Elements,  
bread and yeast and rock and wheat  
all meet,

millstone knows fire,  
air carries  
what has come from very far,  
and water understands them all.

The mill. The brewery.  
The point.

The stone works wheat  
and into the flour  
a population comes,

the *fermenters*  
from the galaxy  
arrive—

wine *is* the blood of bread.  
The two  
of one arcane substance (“Arise, Arise,”  
being air, get high).

This is the abhisheka of the Ordinary Elements  
happy as the morning light  
under the bluest in weeks

Bach light, Bardo light, the sacred most ordinary sky.

The weather changes when you call.  
You bring the news,  
day is real now,

all the stuff that worries me around  
just mouse-scurry, squirrel-chatter, the scolding  
of my formidable reputation.

How could I tell you over the mirroring phonelines  
(I heard three echoes of me, one echo of you)  
of the wintering goldfinch at the seed,  
the juncos, purple finches, cardinals many,  
blue jays, sparrows, and the stray waxwing from the  
population  
that bothers the bridge,

how do you say tufted titmouse in Tibetan?  
Come home in Hindi.

This is the part of the initiation  
where the simple words we say  
are repeated over and over by the circuitry  
automatic mantra function of this  
electron universe we stumbled in

this is the abhisheka where you hear  
your own voice saying what you mean  
clearer than you heard it when you spoke

this is the *wang* where words come home again.

And this is the abhisheka of the empty bowl—  
mind at rest in the silence of what you mean.

25 February 1993

## THE NATURAL

Low by the tide  
pool flooded  
every year  
this time a  
bridge of ice  
beneath the broken  
stone bridge,

*Brücke*, whereinunder  
trolls it  
a personage  
of the earth's  
long drama.

Speaks stone.  
Talks back.  
Gives milk.  
Laps up.

It is necessary  
(not necessary) to  
know this one.  
Feed this.  
This remembers us.

25 February 1993

I PERSIST IN THINKING THERE IS A  
MEANING IN YOUR LETTER OTHER THAN  
WHAT YOU SAY

*for Liz*

"I feel having started me  
a difference wasn't for you.

Process some  
options, have enclosed  
they will.  
Enclosed  
what I guess  
you want,  
my bright anyways.

Anytime if you were  
in your absence.

Writing it to be developed  
out to have a file  
some applying

I might have progress  
just in the fall of direction  
in reference able to sample  
some of my shaping  
to base shining.  
Enjoy this."

25 February 1993



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This is close to the point where the tragedy  
spills over into a nimble seacoast. *Deracinate*  
*the obligation*. Things are bound to change.  
So much so your great-grandfather's lighthouse  
(le phare du bisaïeul) soon stands forlorn  
in the vast uneasy fields of beets and kale  
which get along well enough in sandy soil.  
The thing you really have to do is dig it out,  
leaf by stalk by stem, the self-incriminating  
evidence you make up as you go along.  
But you. Can't live. On sand. Even salt  
needs a little cheese to make it work, meat  
on your bones, irrigation ditch from the fen.  
All you can tell from music is something going on

that has some business with the heart. But who  
and who they are who scurry to the beach  
even before sunrise, to wash their forearms  
from all the red stains, beet farmers, Vikings  
bloody-elbowed, no man knows. A woman  
stands in the doorway of the windmill  
shooing crows. Or imitating them. I think  
she wants to be one of them, to fly away  
always inland, inland, until there is no rushing  
but her own immaculately lightless wings.

25 February 1993

REMEMBERING WHAT MEADOW GRASS IS  
LIKE, AND SAYING IT IN THE DEAD OF  
WINTER

*for Charlotte*

These are what we need  
a beginning  
as if of flowers  
and then the spiritual  
reprisals begin

a measure  
borrowed from a splash of irises  
beside a stream in Somerset  
nine hundred years ago

Gwlad y Haf, to dream in Welsh  
a Christian mouth  
sweet with fresh praises

and when he spoke the name of Jesus over  
and over there came into the river of his mouth  
such sweetness he never knew from food or mead or  
kisses even

tasted now

in the quiet nothing of a silent mouth  
also the sweet empowerment of love.

25 February 1993

## THE NEW - BORN

*for Charlotte*

Suppose I woke up in the morning and knew  
how to use the toilet and the toaster  
but nothing of before the night I woke from.  
No skill in my fingers older than this light.

Suppose my house a dream place and my flesh  
a dream, my whole life a glimpse  
between dream and waking. *I don't remember,*  
*it may be as you say.* The vast wave  
full of roisterers in bikinis  
belly-surfing on thirty-five foot waves.  
And I was so late to meet her,  
half a mile away beyond the sudden beach  
the huge cathedral where they were waiting.  
This time I've really done it, a dream  
is always losing, I've kept her waiting  
too long while I walked around San Francisco  
and tried to get coffee in a closed cafe.  
Where did this ocean come from  
on my way home? Such green vast exciting  
waves lifting hundred at once and other  
hundreds coming in on nearby strands,  
to whole city seems to be playing in the surf  
halfway into the sky. A dirt path  
comes up from beneath the waves, along it  
a woman dressed in filmy green  
comes dry shod now, not even the hem  
of her mousseline is wet, how could I follow  
her method, how did you do it, dry,  
*but your face is all covered with sand.*  
I don't remember. She smiled at my information  
lifting a hand up to her cheek to check.  
We forgive each other for being accurate.  
But the woman waiting for me in the church  
(which was a bank when I left it)  
will never be waiting for me now. Now

she may be rising on this wave, I will wait  
in stone shadows for her, this time  
it's my turn to wait. The anxiety  
of always making women wait, of being  
in the clock's control but streets take me  
and then I fall between the time and the town  
and no one loves me. The obstacles  
to any meaningful connection.

Now put bread in the toaster, ask yourself again  
Who's asking? This is not the first time I have seen  
a woman in leafy green coming out of the sea.  
And you can know something is the second  
without remembering the first. For things  
have their ordinals built into them,  
Brouwer's "two-ity" maybe that makes me  
*uncountingly accurate without before.*

Things carrying number. No sound at all,  
even of the sea. A smiling woman looks at me  
and mouths carefully what looks like  
the movements of tongue and lips that mean "seven."  
Or it might be Severn. This is not San Francisco.  
This is the lost City of the Legions.  
Who dares to fall asleep and wait for me?

26 February 1993

## CARRERAS SINGS ROSSINI'S OTELLO

Still holding silence as an agate  
tight in the hand this welshman  
(foreigner disdained) (fond of  
the exile that defines him) has

and what he has is a slow ripening  
cabaletta when he begins to speak.  
Josep, sing so. Bend the Rossini  
*fiorature* to match the sunshine

pouring in the unshaded window  
by winter light undeclined to absolute  
shape of sound into another  
sensing. A Moor in Venice.

A woman on the moon. A word  
anywhere. Exile ends in ear.  
Trying to count with brittle numbers  
the voice alone avails.

Don't know the plot of this story.  
The name of our agony constantly  
transforms. "Situations change."  
Let this dream end in self-forgiveness.

27 February 1993

(love's bumper sticker)

MY OTHER MIND IS THINKING IN YOU

28 February 1993

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*for Charlotte*

Things take too long to rise  
it is "occasion," a falling  
into the marrow of the sea

from which the Florentine saw rising  
like an iceberg painful and serene  
in sunshine Purgatory

into the blue sky. It is a matter  
of prepositions: the array  
spread out for our attention

and the order  
in which we look at each wave top  
one by one fancying resemblances

by which we are false-comforted  
brought into the feel of meaning.  
Only something like nothing can help us then.

28 February 1993

## THE VALLEY

Blue blue the river frozen over.  
Sun hummocky ice the sun  
over to Highlands. We have come  
into the valley. We have learned  
to live inside the crevices of things.

It happens all around us  
and we breathe our little peace.  
(As if we *did* in all this doing!)

28 February 1993  
Bowdoin Park



## GWYL DEWI

Tomorrow the politer Welsh  
will wear a daffodil.  
None here of either  
except the sun  
out of the ice.  
I am its stalk  
or stem. Connecting.

28 February 1993  
Bowdoin Park