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NOW THE DAY FINISHES ITSELF

Fish are born in the quick Metambesen
men mourn for things they never loved.

There is a mystery in being certain
even though we failed to see the first woodchuck today
as I had promised
reasoning from Sun.

Like any Apollonian. Late to class
for forty years I own
the other moiety as mine,

the chaste Irish drunkards are the real Apollos
and the businessmen skiing at Aspen
each on his own expensive set of slats.

While the Dionysians slump against the wall
feeling the grateful pressure on their hips
of ordinary gravity this lonely earth.
I don't belong to anyone.

8 April 1993

EARTH WEEK

I knew an Earth Day once the festival
gave kids one more chance to twitch
as usual beneath a blur of sound
scared the snakes in their secret caverns
you could hear it across the river and the birds
fled down the noisy sky.

Is this what you mean?

And men talked, the older the more so,
old words and lots of them, ideas, opinions,
so many answers and not a single innocent question,
talked and told and lied

and then more music came,

is this what you mean?

and sad middle-aged hippie women

sold mass-produced handicrafts from stalls,

is this what you mean, a ceremony

to make us feel good about our habits

by pretending they are somehow good for earth?

How can the earth take pleasure
from what drives the crows in panic
and makes all the deer run away,

is this what you mean, to bruise the earth again,

with one more local bosnia,

pollute the silence of the actual,

bruise the order of animals and celebrate

one more loud unconsciousness?

Listen, if it scares the snakes it hurts the earth.

9 April 1993
Good Friday

SOLITAIRE

the bad cards the boys
playing cards on Holy
Saturday blue-violet
veils on all the statues
the grief that no one admits

we were born with
it, it will never
be less than ourselves

a few of them believe
that there is nothing
and we can find it

that there is no one there
and calls their names

They hear the sound
far off they are patient
they let the cards
fall through their hands.

10 April 1993

EASTER BORNING

Fates
of being new,

to be born in an empty world?
and who is speaking?

the sky. Have it begin with the sky.
Where they come from. Here they are.
Again. The travellers who are us
after we forget. From life to life
imperilled by meaning.

11 April 1993

for Charlotte

There is a measure
a meadow
waiting for my false and true actions
pleated like a white skirt of a woman
scrambling down warm rocks above the Cornish sea

and all actions are folded so
pli selon pli
and sometimes the first intention
sticks right to the face of the last result

like blackberries
you have eaten and long forgotten
but the soft skin beneath your lip remembers

Something kisses me
the Bull strides along the sky the hero
falters and sleeps and dreams of an anguished ceremony
by which he became a man

but he is not a man

a heap of stones
piled up in the sun a word
or name that men repeat

something in the mouth
not much more taste than wind

And all actions are folded
no way to finger them apart

the pleating of consequences

does not have a natural end

Something kisses me
and the sunlight
sways like a pleated skirt over the sea,

we see through the cloth of things to the contours of
the sacred body of reality
shows through like muscles through thin muslin

only if you know the original
do you know what the shadow means.

12 April 1993

Quarry of the day. At bay.
Being good to people.
As if a word had something to say.
The forest. People who are green

the way it shines when they come
out of the woods. At night they seem

and all day long it seems enough to look,
touch is that membrane you think

unites you but I do not touch.
I am not sure. A day
is something bright and hard and arrogant
but never sure. People

who are green. Being good to them
as they move away to where they are.
Kissing their shadows
would be a new idea,

maybe a valuable mistake.

13 April 1993

It doesn't get easier to say the simplest things
but it gets briefer. It doesn't get truer
but it gets more obvious. Eventually
the thing is before you, or even me, like a cup
with something in it. This is the moment,
to decide. There is drinking to do. Isn't there.

13 April 1993

THALES, 4

for Charlotte

To be at the edge of things where the members
of the oldest club leap and amuse themselves in the foam
constantly evolving to the Sunlight state and constantly
falling back into the airy measures of the dark—

moi, I can't breathe in all this light— bask like a shark
shimmer like the whole broad sea
unconfused by whitecaps, *moutons de la mer*

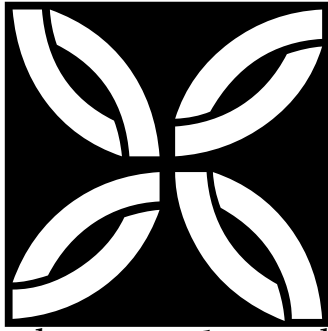
water is caltrop it gets you wet no matter how you hold it
it sticks to you it changes color it makes dull things shine
makes old men's hair come young again

and how the pebbles look when the spring freshet
gushes down the dirt road by the sewage treatment plant
and every granite's jasper and every jasper is a ruby

what I'm saying is Water is a network
meant to catch us
it folds us in Aeschylean meshes
and we are lost

lost in the rhetoric of being loose, lost in liberty.

13 April 1993



There are persons near this Celtic feeling

who remember without a hint of bleakness
the powerful sunsurge on the Severn.

From which she came
mounting the shingle with a swing of green

as if the orient had recalled itself incense by incense
in the swing of her pale hips inside the afternoon

bearing testimony: from the river: those who stay
and those who merely remember.

13 April 1993

for Charlotte

A call like threshing you say
from unseen
flat along water
among marshes low tide
bird hidden or hiding
in scrub shallows brown
spiky uprisings

among the names a simple

and later see them ducks or ducklike
waiting in the far
what the quick wind
scours
 shadow under weeds that are not weeds.

13 April 1993

Set the calendar in motion.
Divide the sea. There is no storage there
and everything in use. What we disremember
is Osiris there
and regulates the hymnody of thought
whereby ideas and images
arise as the mind.
What we call the mind, this Africa.

14 April 1993

What the young poet will wear
will be hair, what the older
poet will put on
will be opinion.

It doesn't do any good, they see
right through us to the glee
inside, the faun-foot unpersoned amorality
delighting in the thing of things
and fiercely hiding.

15 April 1993

Virtues of a broken thing
a taste of burn
morning in the not yet rain
translate from the Pali
everything we speak of is imperfect
& all imperfect things are marked by suffering

scraping the burnt toast
I retreat fifty years to the kitchen in Gerritsen Beach
the house is empty
my mother is dead

for half a century the same
sea gulls have wheeled silently above this house

whose address is lost in misery and history and light.

15 April 1993

The beginning says Rabies the end says Rage
these words are related like Yewtree and If
across the separations we endow with water

this is a staircase leading to the static
I listened to all night from Cinicinatti
thinking it godly on the warm brown radio

when a high mass from Boston answered the night
reasoning It is Christmas the life around us
congests with literal-mindedness

and all these people we see hurrying in the street
rain or no rain are in fact sinister
translators searching for some primal certainty

they can market as an Equivalent *ohime* there are no
equals signs built into this svelte cosmos
no room for indentities in this joyous vast.

answering the quick thought of Lee Ann Brown, hello 15 April 1993.

H E D E R A

for Charlotte

What is written as stone
tells only the story we imagine
whenever any word is read,

is red or green with age, the cutmarks
of the mason's chisel fresh
forever after, a word

can't lose the cut that keeps it from all others
so we read it stone by stone
this pier this transept

carrying the bulk's weight
over the equal-minded planet
up towards a pale sky. Martyrs

remember what it means to bend
offhand and pluck a flower
while the mind is busy with God or such

and men are watching
poised for the kill.
As this tiny blue ground-ivy

with the intense pungent smell
today by the old brick wall
of the movie theatre

blue against red and the light
fading. Why have I plagued you
with description, you who are stars

notched in the blue gloom of my mind
and ardent, lucid, forever?
Is talk worth so much?

Was I even listening?
I imagine the Parisian inscription
you read to me from H.D.

and her words fade
into my memories of the place
jostling with Japanese tourists

cameras flashing at the consecration
some old French priest keeps
kissing the consonants of praise

while the bazaar shivarees around him
under the arcane inscriptions
we never will condescend to understand.

Not far from there you sat on the rim of a fountain.

15 April 1993