

7-1993

JulC1993

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Recommended Citation

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CARDIOLOGY

Or I am weakened in this feeling

a bird in my arms
that drinks my blood
and spews it up again
out to the ends of the world

the heart,
the sky
is falling down,
in pieces, the pieces are birds

the hearts of every one of us
an alien flock.

19 July 1993

TIRESIAS

What has to be determined
is the color of pleasure

what kind of bird it is
seen so briefly
in the mood of the wind

wet road a music
ears ready to be analyzed

I have been both man and woman
and the best sex of all is silence.

Color is a rumor of relief.

20 July 1993

ORNITHOLOGY

Suddenly they fly away.

Build a philosophy on that.
Only on that.

20 July 1993

THE WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Then we wanted *aventiure*
which was what came
looking for us
dressed in crimson
on a creamy palfrey
leading us on,

but was not,
though it was like, what next
we wanted: *adventure*,
by a shift of emphasis
from “what comes” to us to
what we do about it
when it comes.

And that turned by natural
enlargement to what we wanted next,
experience, what we do about
anything, yes, but mostly
what it does back.

And those who quest for experience
easily get their wish. It happens
us endlessly.

When what happens
just is not enough, we turn
to the next thing, *entertainment*,
what comes out of the screen
to hold us beholding,
we are beholden
to its alternative destinies, we reel
from life to life in seconds,
new experience
only a whim away. No delay.
“To hold something between you and reality” —
that's entertainment. As the song says.
Hurrying to their destinies
surfers in crimson foil terrorists
while beer is drunk. Pale

liquid of our destinies, lite fate,
the good king dozes on his throne
and from his listless hand drops
scepter-wise the remote control.

21 July 1993

Why should I have to think now?
I never had to think before.

Soul-mates, as neatly packed
as seven days inside a week,
the dream has nothing left to tell us.

I should start thinking of my destiny
but afternoon always seems closer,
when the wind dies down
and all the mirrors sleep

and something —I've never known what it is—
comes over the day the way a stone
shows its color and pattern when it's wet.
But there is no rain.

A brass lamp
on my table does my understanding for me.
A piece of bread ready for some birds.

And is it destiny already, noon, mad,
come out of the silent zenith
to find me counting rosaries,

knucklebones of all I've known. experience,
a wager?

“Won't you ever stop?
You know she'll never listen.”

21 July 1993

THE FULL-LENGTH MIRROR

The indecorous reprisals
a knee makes against a penitent

or aching in the bower
after the phantasms of desire
dissolve satisfied in midday sweat
and the body is its own agenda—

No matter how far we go
in this matter of money
morning science gladdening the going hour and
all of our hurrahs,
 we
have this clamorous (sometimes glamorous)
companion,
who turns out to be more myself than I am.

22 July 1993

What is that rabbit eating
and who is watching me from his eyes?

By the birdbath, early morning,
I love to wake up with a good question,

lonely as the rising sun.

22 July 1993

The moment between
a thing

and then the wind comes
because we forgot

open or shut burning or extinguished
all the anxieties piled

a flock of blackbirds
falling towards a lawn I am

a door once open
never closes.

23 July 1993

I don't want you to see what I'm doing
you have to feel it with your hands.

23 July 1993

Is it luminous
as if rising from sea foam

almost dark now
when you see it

surrounded by what you've been with
all day all night all the next day

quiet as the moon
but bending you down to look

always to look at what it is
rising into something like light.

24 July 1993

Grackle strut
they move
for all their privilege
like ducks,

glossy black opposites
up to no good
he stares at looks at me
appalled by my judgment
or my prejudice

It is not hard to understand the language of birds. Hard, though, to let myself know that I understand. Hard to listen. This is a message and I understand it. I walk this way, not that. I turn back at their cry. Many times in the dark woods guided by crows. Another story. The story of trusting them. Trusting what talks to me. They see far and are very hungry. They moves through space unconditioned by my boundaries, and I do not see their own. They are in a little way enough like the mind to be trusted the way you trust what you remember. Or what you want.

24 July 1993

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Watching Lama Norlha do a *mo*

a vast intimate silence comes around
everything.

In a little bit of time
the quality of knowing
changes.

I stare at his fingers moving the beads and counting them,
counting without the impertinence of number. His fingers
seeing something else. I stare at his fingers, and a thought I
guess to be his opens like a window in the thought I take to me
mine. Through it I hear him say, Don't look at my hands. Look
at my knowing, at my mind, at *how I am* right now while this
knowing knows.

24 July 1993

6 THERMIDOR

Lovers meet
by the brook

in the heat
they retreat

into pure color.
No rain.

The revolution
is two hundred

the milk
is almost sour.

24 July 1993

BLAMING THE MOUNTAIN

The mountain was there before you
—that much you know, and you guess
it took a long time for it to get there,
its own time

and a mountain is there.

You realize one day
that through your whole life
there was never anything bigger
and it has always been there, ready for you
and you can climb it—

you begin to think it is good
to climb a mountain,
very good, maybe you can reach
the top, maybe it is
the best thing you could ever do.

And you begin. The preparations
the supplies the hope the friends
the helpers the first-aid kit the books the maps the shoes

—and up you go
until it is only you and the mountain.

You understand:
everything a mountain is, is here.
It is firm,
there is no persuading it,
a mountain is always right—

as long as you understand that
all goes well.

But when it gets hot and tired in you,

cold and bored in you,
you let yourself dream
lowland dreams.
You let yourself imagine
that the mountain has ordinary feelings,
feelings about you,
that the mountain is making it hard for you,
that you might be able to make the mountain change its mind.

And you try.
Till some day you fall, stumble, slide,
break a little somewhere
and hurry down the slopes
limping and shamed and full of anger.

Back home your friends take you out to dinner
and reward you for trying
and they listen fascinated to your stories
about how terrible and mean the mountain was,

how little it understood you,
how little it responded to your devotion and desires,
and you spend the rest of your comfortable life
blaming the mountain.

Yet it would have been a fine thing
if one day you really had gotten to the top,
it would have changed something in you,
only in you,

a mountain is a mountain,
but climbing a mountain is only about you.
Only helps you, does nothing to the mountain.

The mountain would still be unconquered, unconquering,
still there, still just there, still not you,

but you would have been on the pinnacle
looking out forever,

and for as long as you stayed there
you would have known a little bit of what the mountain knows.

25 July 1993

for Ilse

He's bent over it
bent wood and him
bent too till he's no
more than a nose
in dark clothes
with the long toes
of his dark hand
walking on a lute
or mandolin, his
Russian self-
absorption hums
a crazy sound
in us, we say O
it's music it is music
coming out of the dark
inside him, only
from what's in there
in the dark
inside the clothes,
Herz oder Hode
no one knows,
some singing hard
to be heard, a maybe
man a maybe word.

25 July 1993