

8-1993

augF1993

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Recommended Citation

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DAWN UNDER NASHAWENA

Holding something in hand that belonged to another
one would say of sailing people:
they wear their body differently.
You wonder about the tense tuned spring
of a body slapped around by wind
and waiting for it, willing it, though long waiting
is usually good for the ecstasy,
good for the virginal zing. I remember.
Right now the sailboats are Chinese cutouts in the channel.

Dawn under Nashawena.
I have watched the meager, spoke-like clouds
match-lit from under gradually break into flame
first the highest southwest tip and then
finally the whole of it underlit
like a sleeper throwing one nude leg over the horizon
and the junks shiver a little at their moorings.

Hot it will be. And now the great disk is afloat
to rule for fourteen hours and no place to hide.
It won't be long before the worst is obvious.

2.

I see I have been detained by description.
You don't have to Dickens the day,
enough to say it,
sunrise, boats in the far channel,
gulls floating by, what am I doing up,
who gave me this red pen
it has the feel on it of an unknown interesting other
liased to me by some tiny generous act,
here, write with this, an airline,
was it, or a diner?

Things out all night now catch the light,
symphony in blue and gold in the style of Whistler
— antique sunrise, how sad and cultivated

that each day the newest thing
should be so hot with reminders,
now furnished with cloud, now I need blinders, the gulls
start shouting at the suddenly everywhere manifest light,
no maybe more about it, this is day.

3.

One remembers the feeling, not the circumstance.
Or the feeling still contrives to linger in the thing.
As usual, we let things do our feeling for us,

and all I remember is the red cylinder, red ink,
Denver, a smile. I wanted the moment
to give me something and it gave me this.

4.

And this other one, blue similars, things like the sun.
How to decipher what words almost mean?

Soon we run out of resemblances,
then we just have her name.

27 August 1993, Cuttyhunk

If I were a, no, had a,
garnet I would
give it back to the mountain

Gore, where the mines still
work and the gravel's red
all day long

and there is a cliff from
which you can see Vermont
the opposite

in every way
what happens
I am glaciation.

28 August 1993

At dawn I must wait for the sun to go down
stand on the highway looking for quiet

I light my cigarette from a handful of water
it hurts inside me when people smile

O I want them to be happy really happy
and the rictus of all that gives them pleasure

gives them pain, the goofy grin of getting it
the bellyache of permanent entitlement.

Only when they're sad are they near me
and understand my stupid ecstasies

I share with them a word or a prayer at a time
while the moon sinks delicious in a starless sea.

28 August 1993

Chas/town in hot

the sun naked
the only
thing in Massachusetts that is,

Missa Nuda,

the chrysanthemmic diapason
of our mongrel voices
gold-lifted into
cantilena, this
conversation that strikes
other nations as so musical

of ours,
 and they're not sure,
are we sure
how one feels about music.

28 August 1993,
near Worcester

Let each child claim one of his father's skills

the rock of the whole of them
up there plain for them to see every day of their lives,

his qualities, the things
a man can do.

One by one reaching puberty to make their claim.

28 August 1993

No matter
how often

it is different
no matter

from you
seed

sintering destinies
like Miles

too late
not to be able

it comes to be
you find it

where it runs out
drove

into the pines
a father

a machine.

29 August 1993

Two crows
shoulder
to shoulder on
one branch
shouting koans

louder & louder.
Am I listening?

29 August 1993

DREAM OF A RATIONAL CALENDAR

I have one the Ace is grass
and Lauds is all the names you loved
poor lonely alphabet
when you still need someone to
touch me

A fingertip revives the flesh

o this Lazarus of a body we
until the thee-
summons by a wordless word

and then the coming and the coming forth!

2.

Doktor Mesmer, stricken with ontology
heals most diseases by passes with his ordinary hand
never touching the skin

but the skin is touched,
the millimeters dance with air,

the movement knows it
and from the inside out, the movement
touches and the body

becomes itself. Smell of a doctor!
Sweat and flour, smell of crucifixes.

3.

Touch me,
I am an hour.

Count by moons
and ravish by eclipses,

you can sit right down in it and close your eyes
because there's nothing that's not right here
go-less and come-less and not staying,

it just comes to notice
without evidence.

4.

The ignorance of number
is bitter as the salt of words

tides going out around my ankles
leave me nothing to remember.

30 August 1993

KNOWING SOMETHING ABOUT THE DAY

Knowing something about the day
(columns fallen on the shore)
all that you learn about your family
will trick you into thinking you're you,

think you're the one they know—
reared, fed and cordoned off
to be an inviolable precinct of the hive
doing mom-work and pa-chores

till the fairy moon sank into the sea
(fallen columns point to sunrise,
sunset) sometimes in sheer agony
of ennui you'd go to the dark

and say Here is my pale skin
star-cast, brittle light, woollen shadows,
all offered to the intense absence
you find on the other side of talk

(the columns had fallen before you came to be
veined temple of some previous identity)
and you showed your body to the night
because it has no eyes.

31 August 1993

NORTHERN GODS

Counting by nights
black beads slipped
through Baltic fingers
full moon on shallow sea—

the world's full of revenges
won't let you forget
what an oak tree means.
You lose the names and keep the thunder.

31 August 1993