

11-1993

## novA1993

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## NIGHT SOUNDS

As a kind of amazement  
maybe  
a kind of ark in the attic  
with real animals in it  
you hear prowling through the ceiling  
when your head is somewhere in between  
prayers you can't remember and a face you can't forget  
the predictable ornaments of the dark  
come towards you always looking like eyes

2.

but the hearings  
the footsteps and gentle snuffles  
the slither over,  
hoof clatter  
the length of your mind

for a while all you can think  
is what you hear  
and what it looks like  
up there in the empty attic  
pink insulation stuffed against the sky.

1 November 1993

## MATTHEW OF WESTMINSTER'S CHRONICLE

Egregious the piracy  
a land against some man.  
The waves fall for it,  
broadly the Conquistador.  
M. Guillaume, from around Caen  
thick with apple trees and November

and up in Waltham the cross tilts outward  
to remember Harold Last-King,  
nodding good-bye to him at the chapel door

but the cross always tilts inward,  
casts its shadow on the glee that masks the mind.  
Remember all your dying,  
this time and next time,

while the great ones  
with palm fronds in their hands  
or bowls of rice or milk or empty bowls,  
they die to demonstrate.

1 November 1993

## ARS LONGA

Landward the scribes  
tend on the ocean of pure inscription  
not yet desperate

believing somewhere comes a final word  
when written  
brings an end to their laborious swimming

scribbling onward to some haze of surf  
that might be land or rock  
or maybe just more rhythm rhythm

sound and sense in a nowhere dance  
and all those miles to reach  
before the dubious beach.

2 November 1993

## VITA BREVIS

Everyone's life is exactly the same length at the moment when they say "all my life." Like a measure of music, it is the same length no matter how many items are in it. The perception is plenary, impartite, whole. It is, at any moment, all my life.

2 November 1993

## ASGARD

The place that waits  
continuous  
with a beginning

apt for all our leavings  
like the hotel in Montreux  
the fuchsia dangling scarlet

or paler into the lake  
calm under so many angers  
but above us

as if we were trailing leaves  
flowers and the rest of it  
drooping down from heaven and

otherness ties us to our own.  
It is a box, remember,  
fanciful and adequate at once

for all that we would think  
to keep in it,  
darling, our broken gods.

2 November 1993, 14:28

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It is not time to fight an old battle.  
Instead, this morning, see  
if I can make peace with a new enemy  
before the habits of hating grow too hard

and the iron rails lead forever into the morning haze  
carrying everybody away into Siberia.  
Yet, o Moscow, it is from Siberia  
that the sun rises and comes to you again,  
every day, every day the new life,

the *Why* in the sky, ah winter,  
so few hours you give us to remember.

3 November 1993

## MOSAIC

Angry at the surge of grace that gave me,  
I deal another stone. I carve these tenets  
Arbitrarily in arkose, sandstone I read  
In sunset red, and trace new laws  
From what the birds said mincing overhead  
Careless with their shadows. Do this. That don't.  
The ceremony of instruction enthralls me.  
I compose a multiverse where everything obeys.

4 November 1993



## THE REVERENCE

Burnt a slip of paper  
had a Celtic cross on it  
and a hammer of Thor,

wanted to burn it  
just from respect  
folded the paper

and the flame took well  
burned quick & sent  
two horns of fire

out either end  
symmetrical upswept  
and fine: sign

of the oldest  
west, *boukranion*, bull  
horns upturned,

horns of uterus,  
being everything  
to us, a sudden god.

4 November 1993

## OBSTACLES BIGGER THAN THE MOON

The little meanings I left in your mouth

so raw a sister in the sweet of time  
fragarnt and billy-fool

for her we lost our white. Sool. An eye  
under a bridge staring upriver—  
everything comes here, pay the troll,  
fear of every nook and cranny,  
face it, fear of hole

because the Eagle in his high reluctance  
abstains from earth

can I be that bird, father, or so  
many animals in the woods or  
pesh for fish in the blue water? Da?

Daddy? The trouble with never is now.  
The trouble with women like her  
is you have to leave the man world  
to be with her and then you're nowhere,

not a man and not a woman and  
what cabinet do you relieve yourself in  
then, hero, what door?

You're a kind of magic flower then  
pissing pollen all over the rug  
and nobody wants you cept she does  
want you hanging around.

The trouble  
with anybody is everbody else.

Flesh talks and who listens?  
Everything comes her. Open sympathy  
her camera. Keel scrape her music.

And the damned things is she's whiter than you'll ever be  
or ever was, take my meaning,  
in such a blue going.

Get into the canoe,  
son, can't help it, you're on  
your way to her now, hero,  
without a haircut, vandalizer,  
mandolin, keep it up, the sleek  
vessel makes its own way  
current-coddled to the dark portal.  
There she knows.

Pull the ripcord  
and the river falls away, leaves you,  
gull, in her mortal gather.

Diamonds of some sort in your hand—  
you are suddenly conscious of not  
having come with nothing. You are something.  
You trade your canoe for a farm on the moon,  
you kiss her shadow with wet sloppy lips.  
Far away you hear those strange  
animals Ordinary People passing  
at cross purposes on the road above your head.

5 November 1993

## BRUMAIRE

And the brume of it the mist of it  
knows on. The speakable  
confusions of the hill  
worrying morning traffic in the mist  
and here I am again lost in a name.

5 November 1993

## VOWELS

As much as measurement  
a day shaped like an alphabet—

wet feet, gong going, a woman  
staring into the rain—

“an ox in a house  
a camel in a doorway”

God is a window  
with her pale blue eyes.

Is it enough to see  
what we are given,

not looking, just regard?  
I feel my wet feet—

is there some other animal?  
broad steps, the beaver's lodge

“overbearing” an animal's  
sense of what is right—

animals are people who don't ask questions  
and how soon they will be old

only the come again,  
the salmon,

unchanged, the same one  
ever and again springing up the falls

unbearable with becoming.  
His lower jaw lances out

for the final and glorious combat  
we also this moment are.

5 November 1993

## ORLANDO IN LOVE

*(after an episode in Boiardo)*

Something about guarding a bridge,  
knights, a woman in a tree,  
pine, and keeping a watch  
on the devious vocabulary of divine explanation—

what justice feels like when you hold it in your hand:  
viz., life after life,  
a barrier to easy conclusions,  
take the woman in your arms

even if you have to hold the tree up forever,  
disguised as the earth.  
We walk the way we think  
whereas the knights are dubious

explaining the condition of the bridge,  
Kafka-like, you can't cross and must cross  
and all the while the woman  
tells you everything you hear is lies,

o what a simple explanation, all lies,  
under the green hem of her long robe  
her truthful pink feet peek  
dangling above you where she sits on the branch.

Believe her feet. How did you get here?  
I was born. I opened a book.  
I slept and woke and then  
her insinuations resolve me to some action.

This bridge (I claim) is mine,  
I cried, I sneezed, I sneezed so loud  
crows in a neighbor field  
stood up quacking into the sky

and wheeled and wheeled around  
trying to find the moment where they'd been.  
Every moment is a dream of passage,

a word hard to read, a broken bridge.

I broke the bridge  
and then I broke the river.  
It is well to stand aside from all these questions  
weeping for the death of fair ladies.

6 November 1993



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That other language

the wind is making  
sideways the truth shears  
cuts through the streets of rock  
this long week building

and what turns in the winds turn?

7 November 1993  
Thubten Chöling

(Morning awkward)

Hand feels  
as to say  
it never penned  
a sense in sound's corral  
or spoke a sign of it

liberty you silent flower  
growing from the trash of me.

7 November 1993  
Thubten Chöling

NOVEMBER

Still time for slim reeds  
stems slender seedpods  
chivvied by a high blue wind

Nature becomes me naturally.

7 November 1993  
Thubten Chöling

## NOTES FOR THE PRODIGAL SON

Verdun sun  
out the train window  
mist in the trees  
a woman in the mist

then the little forests  
of the Champagne  
sugar mines of Oahu  
salt beds of Utah, all  
power was given to me at the start

and I have spent it word by word,  
father, in the swinery of sweet  
poetry,

to speak so clearly  
what I never knew

now come empty-handed  
and full of knowing home.

8 November 1993

THE INSIDE ALWAYS TELLS

*for Charlotte*

The inside always tells  
The wake-me madam  
Pounding my parietals my frontals  
The joining-of-the-senses  
In that Suspicious Triangle  
In the middle of my mug

“O sniff this wake-world  
and try to curl around to sleep  
*noch wieder*, thou art  
a dog in love with pleasure nearness,  
cross-eyed with desire, your blue  
(*blaue*) flower (*Blume*) bloometh  
at the tip of your Eternal Nose.”

Things arise not from discussion  
Nor doth Verity unslip her garments  
Till the mind holds still—

Peace me, Charli, and the dungeon roses  
Spring out of the most uncrannied wall,  
Plague-flowers, time-lilies, all spread their  
Senses out, their meanings fragrant  
And even in that doubt  
The held mind haltered  
Neuters the nihil and the brightness  
Lasts—

                  it is difficult, darling,  
This guess I'm wearing  
But anything is better than a hope.

9 November 1993

