

11-1993

## novB1993

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## END OF THE FAMILY

Break a bone they said —those grievors  
politicked to jungle —is that a word—  
your grandmother supposes for all her father  
disappearing in the Raj a cup of tea  
is all your Orient, your gold mistake.  
Dare not now put milk in it  
(father of a hair comb, a nib, a spanner).  
Ten be nimble waiting as a gate. Jack.

Unthinkable workmanship of doors.  
Jack of Doors. A trick or two to play  
on Father Time who's always pushing pawns.  
Answer the phone, it is the moon  
trying to dapple you all over with his light.

10 November 1993

## BANANA SKINS

Vests on the trees I please  
no one but myself  
you understand and sometimes thee  
my thowtening amie my world my fox or  
vixen scurrying through shrubbery

jazz's a music made

of some deal new and some deal out  
of fashion swing to juvenate  
or make it new, mon père E,  
jazz makes it new

not song but singing it  
by touch

this kobold chatter of a cold  
crepuscule is for you, mon E,  
given the prestidigitations of  
a painfully marvelous fugue.  
Finger polish. Archaic Tatum common.  
Powell armature of sound my real  
father sold bananas by the *hand*.

11 November 1993

## ORION

Astonished at Orion rising cold and huge  
focused through the bare linden tree

just where he was last year, astonished  
as if either of us had any choice in the matter,

this one big house we have in the bright  
seed scatter he strides through and I forget.

11 November 1993

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If I do this right  
you won't know what time of day  
or which way the wind was blowing  
through leaf scraps in the linden trees

but you'll know why copper's red  
and represents the love that women bring to men,  
time's own last will & testament  
is color, only, scads of color  
left to the ungrieving

and you'll know the answer  
the wind gives to every question  
*the world is the place where I can touch you*

now I have explained my agitation.

12 November 1993

THAT IT MIGHT BE A TIME FOR WAITING

for the disagreeable destinies  
in the arms of November  
to make us their promises  
again, the sky trees, passage  
all too quickly into the mist  
where the dark message is read.

Sleep has a pain of its own  
I woke from into this peculiar  
not quite familiar identity,  
my bones don't fit right.  
My fingers don't fit the spoon.

We make it through, convinced  
to the end that the whole thing  
is just a misspelling people believed,  
a mistake so obvious that nobody  
ever bothered to correct it.  
And we live with it still.

13 November 1993

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Maybe just to keep out of sight  
when the pigeon people were up on the roofs  
flinging their flocks into the air  
and standing stupid I thought on hot tar  
waiting for the birds to move the wind  
and the sun would fall into Brownsville  
I stayed in the streets, the streets  
were what I understood and never  
the people who hurried on them, people  
with places to go, beds and tables  
to get to, whereas the world I knew  
was all color and thoroughfare.  
I knew the lines they inscribed in the city  
with their bodies as they moved  
walking firmly to known places  
and I lingered loving the saunter  
of their shapes, the slow show of passage,  
not the preposterous goals.

13 November 1993

## HOLY SONNETS

Thankmeal our grace is given  
backpats glib to bless a benefactor  
built before the world, a “lamb”  
he said, with intelligent eyes  
a devious metaphor, a man who died  
then stopped being dead, a rise  
in the rhythm of the mind, come clear.  
I wish I could. There is only heart,  
heart and blue women in the street  
whose feet moves three centimeters above the stone.  
Only I mean one heart I mean, a thought  
nestled int he chambers of its care  
different from I am. You want simple?  
There is a light that nothing knows.





Be like him by being holy not being,  
loopy with definitions and divining,  
smart voices of the local gods emerging  
from the sensuous lips of smug channelers  
claiming strange earthrights. A ploy  
in lust's legislature, to listen  
to her plummy voice inside your private  
bones, parts, preachments, halogens  
whizzing kidneyed to dispose.  
You love to listen and not hear.  
Whereas the back country still's a rock  
that yammers dawnly soon as sight  
I be and I be big and be 'nough for you,  
sauntering senators, poaching paracletes.



Be glad to god again as if you care  
against all the scary pleurisies of breath  
that keep us to our selves, our sodden selves  
taste-worn wintry cabbages dumped  
from the noisy squats of rich society.  
Be glad to god again as if bright is  
and all the thick of you distended

like a swarm of bees abandoning a tree  
you are, still selfless stuffed with honey  
for me and for me to exact infinity  
from the clumsy calculus of time (one  
pebble after another until none)  
be glad to god again to differentiate  
this this from that one and no one sleeps.



The thing I am that is not me....

[These Holy Sonnets begun this morning the fourteenth of November  
1993 on a day of warm sunshine that turned later into gentle rain &  
mist.]

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To know the few things left  
abandoned  
like the feathers you find  
when birds have had a fight in the air  
and crows chase hawks until the sky gives out

What is around us is vestiges,  
testimonies, inaudible whispers of dead queens.

14 November 1993

(HOLY SONNETS, CONTINUED)

The diminished responsibility of kings  
(the man I am) the watershed deciding  
all that has fallen and will fall. Picture  
a woods almost unpieced by autumn and the sun  
comes through it rising o fierce clear saying  
I am dazed to understand. Mourn  
the unmarrying. Love gave me  
some sense of you then let you know me.  
Anxiety makes a noise like a string quartet  
rehearsing in my ribcage. Not sleeping well  
these nights, fears flicker through gaunt imagery  
like birds too quick to recognize. The land  
I have been given I must rule in my green suit  
stiff standing as a bigfoot beech or I fall.



Light through the window of the old barn  
with crumpled roof and gaping door and twenty years  
it sits in my backyard and I have never entered.  
There are things that long to go on pilgrimage  
and things that sleep, and weather-beaten edifices  
lie thick shrouded in the light itself.  
Untamable closeness of things  
where touch is no remedy for ignorance!  
Who put his house here? Old postcards  
show the town with shutters and lawn statues  
—Portia rebuking prejudice, Miranda coping with the new—  
and deer come homesteading in unseen gardens.  
Behind the dozed panes of windows  
nobody I ever knew listened to no music.



Sternal agitation, some more so-what?  
the body sasses back its boss my aching mind—

who chases it around the desk, blonde typist  
in an eternally dismal cartoon. Blond body  
of my beast, somber mind of the oldest people,  
the clouds roll in on your dumb dialogue.  
We get dressed and go home to our wives,  
whatever that is, I stare at a black pen  
a doughnut two clean milk bottles —one quart  
one pint— a nuthatch upside down on seed.  
Nothing must be happening if I am free to annotate  
the picturesque vacancy of local mind.  
You see how frightened of my secretary I am—  
I cannot claim this body that I am.

15 November 1993

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A small November fly  
walks up the screen  
as if on his way to die  
in some last sunlit corner,  
some suburb of the light  
that will let him in.

15 November 1993

(HOLY SONNETS)

Imagine it against the light and your morning  
Work is done. Imagine the light seep through it  
And same time through you, and evening has. Hesper amen.  
The day was good, the good was given the gift  
Out of mind. Serenity of no transaction,  
Only knowing and nothing known. For thee  
Dear Mind that looks at me my own  
From the friend's eyes. Who shows to know.  
Time is the answer. The lonely body  
In a sea of flesh is one part question  
And one part house on fire in the first cartoon—  
The deer watch in horror what streaks past  
Scorched by imaginary flames. All  
thingliness is fugitive. Nothing slows.



A woman with leaf shimmer on herself  
A rubble of light descending makes her visible  
And I supposed her too to be my mother and a tree.  
For all distractions had broken in the night  
(Not vanished) and all materials renew  
Their properties in the furnace of desire.  
Until wanting is philosophy enough. End  
Of the road. Time for time again. Orders  
To fill. Destinies in a cracked shell. Dawn.  
What has to be done is milk this lovely fire.  
Give yours away. Let theirs become you  
Till you look in the mirror and see only them,  
The years have paid your toll for you, go now,  
Break into small shivers of light that know me.

16 November 1993

(HOLY SONNETS)

Have I turned and what is it to turn  
Isn't it and invitation in the fibers of  
As ink spreads through wet paper  
A smear of personality over our white news.  
From the hidden world the information flows  
Turns this minute into memory, leaves  
Apologies for being me all over town  
At chubby doorways and by waiting beards.  
We are travel. And we go with different speeds.  
Sometimes it happens that we meet— the line  
Of previous walks each future step  
Even if who never glances. What do  
And what stop doing — nothing else to know.  
And try to be home when the neighbors call.

17 November 1993





Knocked down by omens the ticket brokers  
Reassign your seat. Under the eagle  
Not the bust of Verdi. The overture  
Has been playing forever and the curtain  
Seems to be trembling but it might be your eyes.  
Outside, snow is falling on the postcards  
But it is noisy there too, footfalls and flower girls  
And lonely long black cars. Will you understand  
It when it does begin? Will you be distracted  
By the beauty of the people up there so pink  
Wandering around in light? Will the tunes  
Take you to that all too private place  
You came here to leave back home?  
Close your eyes in case you're all alone.

18 November 1993



And if they did not listen would I not speak  
Freer and more suitorly, sweetening the sun up  
As if I could and healing the hidden fire in grease  
To warm your hands so —by that— suddenly you know  
Someone is speaking? From the heat in your hands  
From the moon on your fingernail, tell, tell.  
Until there is all telling and nothing told.  
Then you are the story, and cast no shadow.  
Short of breath you still catch up with the light.  
But they are listening. I thought the myths  
Were all inside but when I speak you hear them,  
My obvious mistake. Out it, out  
With the holy business, heart scraps and hopes,  
I wrestled with your enemies till I was one.

19 November 1993

## TURPENTINE

the Terebinth again the bitter  
knowing that deserts do to their beasts,

do in them as they wander beating the sun

between earth and the back of the sky  
a crane crosses the sun

a high sharp thin kind of smell  
like a word misspelled you wonder later

and it wakes you at night  
mistake after mistake  
your chest of drawers is some kind of animal  
the wind is your wife calling

and with a smell like that around the house  
you know too many dead people

but there is a house, and furniture,  
and bitter juices that keep wood from rotting

and you're nervous, you keep  
passing the sun from hand to hand.

19 November 1993



A pack of girls granting peace—  
Consolamentum of he-chemists,  
Last rites and dubious testament of sense.  
They came running when I pressed my eyes  
—A myth is ruins, is enough to rules us—  
Into the all day long society pumps images  
Errors and aspirations — to work through these  
And find the way beyond — a myth  
Can only happen to a me — one grunts  
Noisily in struggling out of chains—  
To work against it all your life is not to love it  
Though sometimes a wrong love loves the struggle.



The fur of things be kind or animal  
I need a morning of not going.  
I call myself by the name the mountain needs  
—We are identified by place—  
By fur in sunlight by a fallen tree  
You can rest on and watch the river  
—Wind can only talk when someone listens

Did you think she was a babbler  
This animal of touch? The storm  
Is a jade stone and falls from the sky  
Earth is the mirror that it breaks  
We are the luck —some good some rough—  
That lasts as long as we can see  
Thousands of half-moons in a stormy lake.

20 November 1993



All night the clouds wait to be let out: he  
Went into the Dark Factory and unpieced them there,  
Densed mist into hard frost and this he fused  
To waking emptiness by dint of dawn: sun now  
In a cloudless sky. If no sheep, no need to shepherd  
Them to winter valleys and to summer alps,  
No need for wolves. If no clouds, no words  
Needed to describe. We move free below, shadow-makers  
Making shadows in the sun. Turn us transparent  
And the work is done. The evaporation.  
Trade it all for salt and throw the salt into the sky.  
Usually ending is the hardest time but here  
Wind closes our work for us, endlessly giving,  
Slamming and slamming the door on an empty room.

21 November 1993

## THE BRAZEN HEAD

Guessed surfaces knees progress  
Crawl around on map terrain  
Bone splint to be a

Devil to people again — leathery  
Flower sort violaceous borders  
Clustered round Sony

In bad hotels just consciousness  
Checks out tormented tenderness rehearses  
Bleak fire in red ashes

Since heaven went digital Cross-aiders  
Borrowing acre Baphomet talky face  
(just means Mahomet)

Labial confusions decode leper Baldwin's  
Fugitive realm — I am so sad at all lost skin  
All lost Pentecosts.

Irrefutable animal. Broken oracles.  
Nations shiver not shown some way  
Alamut destinies unherb human moon

### *Old Man of Salt!*

I hear you hear me. You don't need things  
Forever. Wars are over also  
Split palm tree leaf

Bole intact reverse aggressor sword circuit  
Finding insides of tree unspoken scriptural  
How like some red

Athwart white shoulders weight of perfume  
Oil of Ash what dead decline to hear  
Suasions of tune

Telling true because has mouth had fed

On time his ominous arrivals  
"Wouldn't it bird

To see all coast some one really trust  
Hand holds way from mouth  
Some nothing heard

As sit on something warm again or measure  
Skin galvanic great basin profundity of clang?  
Every fall's in it

Rest poised on crater rim brave baring  
Flesh to weird fire? Bonne chance, amie,"  
Few sailed direct

Most hugged a literal sense of where we are  
Enigmatic Palestines and steamy bread re-  
Dolent zahtar

Nasrany tunes musette you dance to  
*Tabula Rosa* and *You are my spine*  
(Hera's Glory)

Conjugate alternate genophores in splendor  
Now learn caverns well, beast with slippers  
Up Mount Carmel!

Nudging sacred precincts medicine bundle kestrel  
Feather peregrine jesses trailing somehow soars  
In wind's belly!

bringing you this flower world "mild aquifer  
John a gush you comfort brazen bears the light  
in forest speak"

Fall of Jerusalem            a space for grieving  
Sixty nine from no corner counting a shape we make  
To banish grief

What works never happens, bird over crimson  
Sails seeking Scamander you north'd a quaver  
Sweet wrong music



Hundreds of miles! Another burnt borough!  
Grass over your head your heels on my hips  
At last I plough

New spell in talking terms elemental eye  
Purpose falter learn language new you claim  
Star-bound sense-weed

Nostoc shimmers on your new-face  
Whose child could ask what womb bear me  
Better sea such tongue tell?

15-16 February 1991  
21 November 1993

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I find a small piece of paper  
square-ruled  
on which I had written once  
not long ago  
and with my left hand  
these words I can just read:

*I never chose the  
hill—  
I was honest to  
the way.*

What could my  
hand have been thinking of?

21 November 1993

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Before the melody  
a word  
locked in the bedroom  
with no supper

hearing itself  
hard. There are antics  
music knows  
this side of hearing.

And it's not all Schikaneder  
greenery and new wine  
a mystical stages  
trampled by leaf shadows

far from Vienna.  
The word beats  
in the quiet hands  
of lovers busy knowing

and in bird fly-bys  
and most in the warm  
hands of children  
making no sense at all.

21 November 1993  
[from notes of weeks back]

*for Charlotte, 22 November 1993*

All serenity is a slice of sea  
always there a level  
quiet as salt a mirror  
made of mornings

I wish I could wake you with news  
wilder than love though love  
is fabric is well-made is clean  
because it aims

well to find you where and  
as you are  
and is shaped by what it wishes to find  
you compel love to come

(slow) to be fine as you are.

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