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for Charlotte

Clean empty glass
upside down
is still full of light

We are held

29 May 1992

[PLACES]

Places that know me
are different from the places I know.

I wish I understood this
but all I can do is say their different names:

Wappingers Falls Shohola Chesapeake Annandale Cambridge
Paris Norfolk
different from Los Angeles Zurich London Bregenz

and one city knows me that I do not know.

It dreams me all night.

30 May 1992 KTC

PHLOX

for Charlotte

May phlox.

Phlox may
subdue.
Sirah,
a pale
as of wine,

color of the shadow of a grape
stain on

what does the paper say.

May phlox
a difference

mauve or white itself
name of a[n
other] flower

taste this text
and spit it out

a kind of pink
something cloudy

bee in the window
it is better to be sure

than any color.
To be without opinion.

30 May 1992

for Charlotte

Chryssa and her sister
missed me at their party—
whose wedding
sea spun, splendor?

A rock on the shore
knows more.

30 May 1992

for Charlotte

Taste this language
full of fear

today
no need for

given the superior Dark Protector

—"nothing need"
but this do.

30 May 1992 KTC

THE DESTINATION

for Charlotte

All that way to see a flower

sea come

noon whistle an hour early
bothered by the sun

cloudy news some

poor Bosnia poor bleeding markets

without compassion
the sea is just ten thousand miles of salt.

30 May 1992 KTC

1.

On the curved clear glass of the
cloche that guards the gilt old clock

the window across the room
all full of river and green and cloud

is reflected very small — a postage stamp
from this very country

a souvenir of now, a message
from this moment to read before dark.

2.

And saying what? It all
is a reflection,

it all is light.
Not even light.

30 May 1992
for Charlotte

for Charlotte

Walking you home
to the retreat house called *The Mind Delighting Samadhi*
in the almost dark

the bats
trying to know us
but losing interest
fast
as they do everything

I keep my arm around your shoulder just in case.

30 May 1992 KTC

Can it help
or who?

Quiet place
to be somebody else—

learned this
from the adulterer, don't
look for another
woman look for another me.

Creation phase.
A god
is something that binds the mind

I mean
that mind binds.

30 May 1992 KTC

WHAT THE NIGHT SAID

Draw a picture of your throne
and you sitting on it
white as a duck
and insolent as Aurengzebe
then wonder why the world
still loves you
enough to lend you bread and breath.

30 May 1992 KTC

These sounds
are a man

afraid of his dream
information

of the clock
and the calendar a man

afraid of his garden
his gender

once you let fear
inside a system

fear rules.
There will be bees

or no bees
bad weather

or none at all.
Once begun

the dread is permanent
so I sat back

in the night and pulled
the robe from off my shoulder

and dared me to turn off the light.

30 May 1992 KTC

Speaking disrespectfully of oneself is speaking disrespectfully
of one's muse, *kandroma*, nurse, mind, soul, Buddha-heart, wife.

From above the room I hear the hiss of rain falling on the tar
paper roof below. From in the room I heard the same rain
pelted on the roof. A hiss, a patter. Or, or or.

The *same*?

We have come so far from our childhoods that the child is
ready to be born.

The nine months of gestation equals the 28° of maximum
elongation between the Sun and Mercury, the furthest
elongation of life preparing to be fresh, *so.ma*, *gsar.pa*, new.

Life is a harvest ripe for taking and making sense of, taking joy
in, reaping with a pure child's view, reaching out to the new
The ninth month is September, harvest, *sMin*.

Speak well of myself
to please my lady,
this wife I am.

31 May 1992 KTC
for Charlotte

Across the river, hard to count in mist,
a measureless freight rolls
very deliberately north.

Bleak gleam of a
tank car's
steel cylinder, then
another, beads

in the dark train.

31 May 1992 KTC

for Charlotte

Box turtle
beside the phlox
painted in Chinese

a yellow lacquer
says its own word.

The rain listens.

31 May 1992 KTC

Speedboat north. Religion
of being wet. Cold rainy day
hard for boats to worship.
Ride a tiger! Caress the wind!

31 May 1992 KTC
for Charlotte

gZi

Offering all this
to the Buddha
— the mottled nature
of our condition.

The zillion stars all round us,
the ones we are

and the everything else
all glittering — offer this,

a necklace of temporary facts.

31 May 1992
for Charlotte

It's not psychology, you know.

Psychology is snapshots of clouds.

This is the sky,

this is the whole sky.

31 May 1992 KTC

[A Dream]

In the dream of the Bad Mass in a beatnik café, a woman on the sidewalk outside bared her thigh and bent low to swing her breast loose of her flowery dress so as to tease through the window such worshippers as I would soon become as afraid but anxious I came to the door. She smiled at me. In I went, and there soon came in two huge tall savage men, one white and heavy and raw cheekboned pale, carrying a gun. He lay unbound on the floor, his blackbeard head propped up awkward as Gulliver against the counter, talking low from his huge head. The other was gaunt and tall and dark, tattooed and scarfaced like Queequeg. Never saw a man so dark, darker than Africa was his queer narrow high head, the blue scratch marks of his tattoos making him darker still. This one had a gun too, an old one, a pistol, and faced me kindly, and kindly fired over my head. A powder passed over me, I felt it, painless, healing, as it seemed. I thought about Queequeg, and was not afraid. I smiled unafraid at him — no fear, though the café people were afraid — one had jumped up and cried Call the ambulance, this is death! as my huge islander came in. I thought the two of them, in fact, were good people, my island man and the white one, stretched out, his bones like mine, really, his face big as Easter Island. They had something to do with the smile of the woman outside.

31 May KTC

transcribed for Charlotte

I fell asleep reading Milarepa,
how his heart burns with compassion
hearing the tigress in the jungle
screaming for her cubs, I wake

in the middle of the night
freight train
so heavy so heavy burdened
screams on its rails
going to the city

the pain we carry
makes us sing.
The bread the suffering.
What is talking in me now?

31 May 1992 KTC
for Charlotte