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[*naufrages*, continued...]

The sea is to be heard.
Not seen in this first mist, "first weather
(tho' not *Gewitter*) we've had on the Island.
Give my love to Erica — all those years of
her lessons have taught me at least to
recognize the descending minor thirds of the
low sea sprawling firmly up the rocky beach below
Mrs Moore's long house"

a line of light.

Sun coin in the water up there.
Now I can see the waves roll in high on Barges Beach.

Something's lifting.
Old Coast Guard station comes in view,
vanishes again.

Ed, you said you loved the Apparencies,
where else shall we go now for our groceries
except to this cunning market of the visible.

Then is it a gleam on Canapitsit,
then a shimmer on the outer harbor,
getting stronger,

moving overhead and the sun remembers?s?
o keep thy moisture Central Zone of air
else the glare be merciless round Low Taylor's house

her fleshy irises talkative in this low breeze
a chill! and no one knows their names
and the sun fades, dark on the high sea

and a thud far off, on No Mans Land the Navy
tries out its toys.

"we had grilled chicken last night
and a sort of home made *ice-cream* made from yogurt and
bananas. While we ate, the darkness came, but the promised

thunderstorm did not. From the deep wells they must irrigate the island."

Lemon. Ginger.

The age of language.

They played rummy in the afternoon, legs exhausted from the long cliff walk. She was fondest of aces, he of straights in hearts or clubs, who knows the reasons?

"If I had my Sanskrit dictionary with me, the big one by Monnier-Williams that Fred Grab gave me, the matter would be further *pursued*."

Discuss the cycle of nutrition in your island.
Illustrate with robins hopping,
savage and relentless birds, well-coloured for their Task,
the Coney common also on this Coast.

The sea is louder now.
With no more brightness yet we see more.

"Tell Jenny she left her black book in our guestroom. I thought it had addresses in it, but it seems just printed things. How is she anyway? We all think eventually she'll choose to be a Nun, the way she's always hankering to be best."

Petunias a little shabby this morning, ragged from wind.
The beautiful the good.

You get them planted
into the serenity of root.

Is a serenade at morning,
my tea already cold,
a morning is a curious machine.

Wake to nourish me.

And now the mist is general.
Swirls of it reach up the hill,
cold wind, a mower

makes a noise like summer.

The beach invisible still sounds.

"O bear us Lord to thy resounding Shore!"
a hymn ends like a pen running out of ink.
Who were those black-peaked birds?

20 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

MIDAFTERNOON

The faun
sated

regards the hydrant red and white
this side the sea this side the
twisted apple tree

On the island's single court
the baritonal oinks of basketball.
How nefarious these unproductive pleasures!
The faun watches glisten on his thigh
the overplus of Energy
dry in ruddy fur.

The sun
a little bit comes out.

20 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

for Charlotte

Hold the actual self in the palm of your hand
like a ball. Morphology
instructs the long history of life on earth,
make mathematic sense of all those feathers and
the banded colors of my irises
united to see and yet shut out
the overweening sunlight whose rhetoric
encourages the meek alyssum on the ledge.
Vineyard invisible in the purplish vague.

20 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

[*naufrages*, continued...]

The people here seem broken with despair.
Talk loud, rev engines, let the roar
of things talk for them. An island
seems to need a lot of noise.
What country are we awayway?
Flags look like afterthoughts.

20 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

EVENING. OVER THE SEA.

for Charlotte

Knowing you has been a deer on the lawn of my life.
People walk calmly and strengthen their nerves beside the sea
But the sea is not calm, the sea is always answering.
Which makes people think they've been asking questions
When all it is is the sweet blue atmosphere over the Sound
White breakers on the hidden reefs of mind.
Only from the foam can you tell that the thought is there
Waiting, trusting to light and dark and wind and every
[common thing
To be particular. To do again what it has always done.
To come to me like the mist that hides the Vineyard
Or gull jabber and bell clang on the soft invisible air.
So an island is the only thing there is
And everything is close. Flower petals shiver in the wind.
We do too. We have come to the place where it must be done.

20 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

for Charlotte

Mist child new as the glacier yielding
testimony of hushed air, killdeer calling
and you hear the sea. The cook is on his way
to his kitchen, quick steps tapping down the hill.
Last night the bonfire raged on the pebbles of the dream.
We heard the woman cry abandon in the midnight
and later little sequel squeals of pleasure maybe
turned between waking and waking to the last shriek
of a rabbit dog beset, the life goes out
the life floods back in on midsummer morning
alive alone as the vast thought fresh in the pale mind
sways like the wooden sea-bass on the weathervane
on the old church old island in a wind from nowhere.

21 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

for Charlotte

stealing light
sweet
steal the hour
from the western cliffs
a fleet of cormorants in May
now only one
necks up from the slough of wave

21 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

Could it have ventured in the night
every solid eventually dissolves in it
low clouds and still wave
I write with the sea

22 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

That giddy laughter was no Dharma dream
a little sunsparkle and a big sea
we are not ashamed now how stupid we become
musicless morticians that powder our minds.

22 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

The corpse of a dog walks reverently
downhill before the corpse of its man.
They look at each other from time to time,
One feels devotion, one obligation.
There's a deserted island across the Channel,
why don't we land there, for Drake's sake,
and liberate it from money, put up some new flag
to stake our claim — we have no flag — alright,
put up the blue unending gonfalon of sky
and claim that gypsy island past the Canapitsit
and save this green stretch of Almost America for its sheep,
claim it from ownership. Boat there, land, claim it for mind.

22 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

for Charlotte

The clouds keep me busy with their reports.
Esemplastic, they read and hear everything below
and — with no withholding — become what they observe
so their shapes tell me of my world below.

They know even more than crows do, they *are*
what they know, and crows (like us) carry information
as discrete units separate from their sense-of-being.
A cloud is all communication. Hence the blue

word cloud shown in Mexican codices. Hence the breath.
Every breath gone out becomes a part of them.
The clouds. I can find in them the place last night
when you called yourself my queen and but my knuckle.

I see it floating there, between the frogpond and the grief of
[cities.

22 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

so.ma

for Charlotte

And every thought is new.
It's just the words are old.

22 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

Trying to protect the mind from the research
needed to make it an instrument of work
and not a rapt upwelling of the unmistakable never-made.

22 June 1992 Cuttyhunk
for Charlotte

[*naufrages*, continued...]

I am Caliban. Sometimes at evening
I look down from this hill at the sea.
And the sea is not flat — it is quiet and grey
and goes up big, and up, the sea is a wall
and the horizon is the top of the wall.

What is over the wall? Nothing.
Or one more island. And if so then one more me
looking blankly at the never-ending
movement that makes this unmoving wall.

22 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

[*naufrages*, continued...]

My own face reflects back from the air

And what if the entrance really is an island?

Kaleb-Ben, my dog of a son,
my Hamnet, my other Prince,
Prince Nahhas, ingrate himself, who

did Shakespeare rage against
below this signifier drunk with disobedience,

Caliban the Bad Son, Goneril's brother, *moi brat'*
this drunken theorist airy even with sudden
political liberty?

Unexpected consequences
of freedom.

My son the mob. Demos
is both Terror and a Crowd.
And on this meager island a Prince of Importunity,
an elf-born lunatic with rugged hands, a male
malevolent Spirit —

and what Hamlet was this
in Shakespeare's mind
he had to find so far out here

on the innocent Elizabeths
howling with rage against order itself?

Sycorax is Socrates. Setebos is a Father God without a Son.
Ptah. Union of the senses.

Caliban lived long imprisoned in the cleft of wood.
Occasional Hell. Rage answering the affronts of light.

The other phase of island,
the angry isolate, the prisoner of the fact of life,
ungainly movement of this Common Limb

lunk-footed, unairy, swink-sweaty,
thick with too much hoping. Caliban.

Therefore I imagined the effortless grace of women
qui non herbam tangentes incedunt, their bodies
curious of glory, nubile-nimble, lissome, pale
vigorous who walk not even bending the grass down,
a wink of light beneath their naked feet.

And by the extremity of my imagination
insisting that glory onto the other, this self
so coarsened and so humbled became your Caliban.
Because an island has nowhere to go. An island
is where it's been and nothing left to do but become
the fearful consequences of all your deeds.

My deeds. This hunk of karma ripened by the sea.

23 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

Such wind and cold last night, a gale
from the northwest, wintercold the wind
created. Bedded down in our snug house
under three blankets we. And cold this morning
in bright sunlight. The coffee perks.
The wind still from that quarter comes.

We haven't seen the moon a while,
I'd guess her final days are on her.

Meniscus of the waves. Soundless
towards Barges Beach. A blackbird
I can hear all right but not the sea.
In all this chill of wind the sun
makes my grey shirt warm. The glare.
Light brings everything right here.

These islands, the last ice's afterthought,
Dorr's house on Canapitsit Neck
black against the molten glare.
Only the map calls it by any name.

23 June 1992 Cuttyhunk
for Charlotte

Every American poet has to be Whitman a while.
And intricate Dickinson and lofty loony Pound
and Melville of the secret glory and tune-sotted Lanier
and haunted Poe. Otherwise the Brit in us will win
and we spill our seed in decorous quatrains then cease.

23 June 1992 Cuttyhunk
for Charlotte

I don't see any reason why we shouldn't reopen

the age of Colonialism

that is, the age of Colonizing,

i.e.,

going There and saying

OK you people you've had this place long enough

& foithermore, just as you wallowed in on your dragon boats
and swan boats and Pintas
and squatted down atop the Iroquois et cetera,

so we ARRIVE.

So (for example, taking sail in the *Billy Budd*, and skimming
over across the swift channel to Nashawena, we come ashore
wet-ankled and hoick up our wriggly flag and say:)

hey, estate of Mr Forbes
we claim this Island
for His Majesty the King of Bhutan

in token whereof we set these signs and portents *en haut* —

and as with Nashawena, The Elizabeths, Gosnold Township,
Massachusetts, so let it be with every territory on this god-
drenched earth,

free for new Meanings in sun's light sprawling.

23 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

for Charlotte

Flowers of seaweed
yellow some spread
and pink
among the ruin lively brown and green
a fisherman's rubber glove
from the wrack full fingered lifts.

23 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

[*naufrages*, continued...]

I weary of my terrible honesty (*says Caliban*).
Why can't I lie to myself like everybody else?
I am a monster of getting what I want.
And I don't get it, which makes me twice a monster.
I belong here, in the luminous limitation
of an island, evening. The sea is almost gone now —
just a soft susurrus like the insincere
last confession of a dying man, or my heart
trying to tell me it's happy with the way things are.
The rangefinder in the camera doesn't lie — the world
is out of focus, shimmering and vague. My glamor.
I have told the truth since the beginning — no father
can bear me, caught as he is in the prestige of begetting,
taking charge of his flesh and making someone be.
Someone *miranda*, "she ought to be looked at."
Outside my door the dark is perfect;
the half-moon set while still was day ...

23 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

for Charlotte

The mappamundi and the noise outside.
There is a ribbon round her hair,

there is a car not starting, coughing, starting
and going down the hill. No lights.

23 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

