

9-1992

**sepE1992**

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And the heavy rains come. An altar  
of water  
I build  
on this black horizon.  
To do these things.

To be capable  
of wet. The growth  
of things around me. Sleep.  
The rock comes with its luster.  
A world is a network of walls.

26 September 1992

I never learned to read: I cannot remember learning. But can I learn it now, to read the way I once knew how, so that the hours pass and the book's own Lady Adventiure comes, passes into the deep of me where *Michael Strogoff* and *A Vision* and *Treasure Island* live now, safe in the inscrutable silence behind the brain?

How can I *take* time?

And where can I take it,  
to save it (save us)

from itself?

Save me from time?

Where do the hours live,  
    and the grey-haired young women  
        in their voluptuous beauty waiting,

hours, grey ones,  
    time tissue,  
        cloth of old.

Rain relents  
    for finches  
        come back to the feeder.

Shelter *in* time?  
    Learn to read at last  
        the natural script?

Two Jews in the mountains  
    walking slow,  
        both of them me.

26 September 1992

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Once every year a night comes when water burns.

There is no moon that night  
and your hands feel like blades of silver  
hard to fold your fingers down against the palm  
your body crackles like palm thatch when rats run

up to look at the moon, but there is no moon  
no rats no trees the night holds all power in itself  
refusing to release energy into the merest form.

Then water burns. You press your forehead  
hard into your palms thinking your hands might be cool  
they are cold they chill the hot blood in the forehead  
so that pain stops for a few minutes

then you say *O that was pain* that word that just  
stopped speaking and now in its silence you understand  
there is not much left to understand.

It's all very well to talk about bread & milk & paper & silk  
but the water is burning, the water inside each thing  
is burning and your eyes see the other side of the night  
where all the people you thought you'd never see again  
are waiting, and all the words are talking again

loud beneath your eyebrows the color of fire.

26 September 1992  
[finished 28.9.92]

## ADAGIETTO

1.

Cat out there  
suddenly alien animal

2.

interpose a fork a choice a lump of meat  
from the we call it cauldron you  
call it what you please  
the name of the whole issue is Cosmology

3.

her lipstick fraught with orient

4.

unwrap the word before you get home  
and speak

this is childhood

where the word  
really means

grown-up people speak privately only  
in the sweet murk of their own garage

5.

street talk is the least public of all  
since it's always aimed at you  
the customer

time's seasoned Individual  
stoop  
to salute

6.

she wore no light at all last night

she was busy breathing just for herself  
aloft above the repellent gizmos of everyday religion

7.

I had a friend  
and had another

Two became none  
with a small remainder

just enough this  
morning to wake as me

8.

by the bridge in Sarajevo  
a name shot in the chest  
says a whole sentence before dying

ventricle of the word  
empty as a bridge in winter

it was not winter.

27 September 1992

## THE DIAMOND QUARTET

Always looking for my inner point

a chant  
in the reverberant quality  
of wood (of weather)

left over from an irreligious Ocean  
*o mer di mi!*

Where is the inmost blue of the diamond  
gotten now?

The man is blind

he walks through woods

the woods see.

27 September 1992



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On humid days of autumn the outer surface of hard candy  
(orange flavor) is gratifyingly soft to the tongue prodding  
against the Matter trapped by the front teeth, soft as a sestina  
or a startling comparison in a Persian ode  
turns out to be a mistranslation  
committed under the distraction of watching a person  
of indeterminate gender, almost attractive,  
disappear shadowy against the striking white of Admiralty Arch.

27 September 1992  
(for William Mullen)

## IRRELIGIOUS TRANSPORTS

All I need to fall in love with a new culture  
is to read a new book.

Albanian manners  
suddenly fascinate.

And so forth. And in the long Tiranese nights  
women stir, their violet eyes measuring  
lamb-fat prayer lamps careful against a fall  
of worship. And they yearn  
for the sound of a tread on their red-druggeted  
stairs. Mine. I have come to you again

out of the unreasonable ignorance of all things.

27 September 1992

## NINE IS THE NUMBER OF EVERYTHING

Catching health  
a squirrel at the feeder

leaps  
at the sound of my door

and a white-bellied bird, is that it,  
is that the gentleman-angel  
come with a message from the inside of my head  
I can only hear out there

in the Everything?

*Because each thing is only one of nine  
we need each other and each thing  
to understand the one of them we are.*

28 September 1992

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Remarkable  
in the fact of it  
the hells made  
out of a morning planet

and in the Dharma-ending time the bell  
rings with a cracked sound because  
the seven metals will not ring together, the bell

will not ring together,  
the text inside your arteries  
understands the gya-ling's blare  
better than brain,

the spirit is not cognitive,  
is not cognition,  
it is a music in the moving,

and in this time the Sacred  
Continuity is cut, is shorn  
by those who sell it piecemeal, supermarket Tantra,  
the spill of seed

the bell  
does not hold,

the bowl between your knees  
alone  
holds the sweet moral milk

fresh even after the darkening of the night.

16 June 1992 [revised 28 September]

[MERIT]

Merit is beyond Habit

it rains

it rains like Gramercy Park

or myopia,

it runs like Myopia at Santa Anita,

it's something that runs fast and stays.

[notation found 28 September 1992]

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lower class miracles  
over a rain-soaked city when  
everything is beautiful the Circumstances  
the dissolve  
into leather love  
                                resilient,  
                                form-fitting, sad.  
The triste, swarthy, shadowed rushing of the  
Wheel.

28 September 1992

## FINDING THE BASE OF THE DAY

*for Charlotte*

1.

Or building it  
in feeling.

Feeding  
on imponderable happenstance,  
the Emperor of Coincidence  
writes down one more music.

It is malachite in the pavilions of Moi—  
green lusters off utility,  
a table  
swept clear of crumbs  
for the sake of sparrows  
waiting always  
in comparable need.

2.

Last night beneath the first gentle lurid probe of autumn colors  
beneath a mackerel sky we heard in peacefulness  
the Ode to Joy of summer's ultimate katydids  
finishing their season over the ground.

3.

In peace, I say, and yet we walked that hour  
woods-fastened to a drear we brought with us,  
doubt and argument and flesh

the way old rhetoric clings to an idea

and nothing's ever new. Except the river was  
and the last light gilding (technical term)  
the tops of the larches. And here and there  
a spicebush lead beginning to go gold.

29 September 1992



*for Charlotte*

o my Charlotte  
there is much to be said  
for saying your name  
saying your name again and again

Charlotte o Charlotte

for one thing  
it's easy to translate  
into any language

that has sounds in it  
and beautiful women  
and people who care  
to call out in love

the name of the one  
beyond all others  
they love

o Charlotte

I learned this  
from listening to birds  
saying the one word  
over and over.

30 September 1992  
from Robert (mari)

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The sky is so big today  
vastness of it  
sculpted by cloud to show  
the immensity of space  
focused around us  
I look up and can't look  
steady at it, it is too big  
too beautiful, too simple,  
too rich with infolded  
destinies of light in shade  
and shadow lost in emptiness,

I look away from it, I look away  
from things, the fierce  
embarrassment of being only me  
and it being all of that,

to say it, the vastness  
is so beautiful, what is it,  
why am I so daunted,

the silence of space  
broken by the noise of looking?

30 September 1992