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[Two Lines for Charlotte]

I WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO SEPARATE MY MEMORY OF
JOE CARTER, HIS USUALLY SOLEMN ANXIOUS FACE
CREASED NOW WITH A DELIRIUM LIKE ECSTASY,
THROWING HIMSELF SIDEWAYS THEN ON HIS BACK
INTO AND ONTO THE SUPPORTING BILLOWS OF THE
SHOULDERS AND BACKS OF HIS FELLOW TORONTO
BLUE JAYS WHO HAVE JUST WON THE WORLD SERIES
WITH HIS PUT OUT AT FIRST BASE OF A DESPERATE LAST
MINUTE BUNT ATTEMPT BY OTIS NIXON THAT PAPALLY
SOLEMN ATLANTA OUTFIELDER

FROM YOUR LEFT PROFILE BESIDE ME AS YOU LAUGHED
TO SEE HIS HAPPINESS THEIR HAPPINESS, YOUR SMILE
CHARLOTTE YOU HAVE THE HAPPIEST HAPPIEST SMILE
I'VE EVER SEEN, TENDER WITHOUT IRONY LAUGHING
WITHOUT RIBALDRY MERRY WITHOUT FACETIOUSNESS
O CHARLOTTE CHARLOTTE YOUR SMILE BESIDE ME IN
THE TELEVISION LIGHT AS WE WATCHED THAT QUICK
GLAD NORTHERN TRIUMPH.

26 October 1992

The elaborate intersections

that made me meet
myself at every corner, made me wait
for me in every bar I could stand
the oozing music from against my need,

my need so angular inside the soft of meat,
it is strange to think of them now
in the saffron sober leafworks of October

when all that yearning all
at once explodes into the blue sky.

27 October 1992

DARK ROSES, 3

for Charlotte

I want to start with your roses
the dark ones
because they flourish
in the golden middle air of October
beneath the blue
the dark ones
into whose deep analysis
the light journeys to find rest.

The meanings.
So many things seen.
The adventure is made of pity,
clover, hillsides, hard languages,
limestone dialects I heard in dream
and the cross you see at waking
the way the windowframe christens the light.

27 October 1992

VOYAGE TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

Knowledge not is not a matter of it
two travelled Woden pillars jettisoned
will light the way — the way wood
burns deep in water — to our new islands
where Retribution touches the delicate coast.
It is a ship that beats against you.

It is an idea. New icelands.
The small can be a word
a word doesn't have to be heard
to be a word, doesn't either have
to say to be heard. Hearing is seldom.

So when the weather bends to look at you
to see the seacoast green behavior of your eyes
remember to be small. You listen
if at all to the basalt of its basement,
the bottom things, dark characters
who strangely know your language
and greet you mornings saying *I know what you dreamed.*

Can you forgive us all? We
who were your alphabets. Can you be wrong.
The shadow comes from the sun,
without it we do not know our way.
Whoever we are. Let the beam go now,
let it fall into the deep Buxtehuding billow
off a little northern coast that's always you.
Most of the birds fly off you step ashore.
Here build your temple, you have finished with the gods.

A cormorant stays. A gull up there gores the sky
and you think you hear your own old wounds cry out.
And there the grey smooth silence lacerates itself
you cry. Let it be as if I never hurt you, could you?
Let it be as if the island never fell
up from the bottom of the vandal sea, and all these
volcanoes never spoke this word now grown so hard.

Stone law, unforgiving of that first abuse,
the fire flows from yearning. Stone law.
Once love fails you it always does. Save us
from going through the door or sinking
into the nonsense of that forgiving fire. Father
gone, mother gone, nothing but a name you have
and that lives only in other people's mouths.
Now matter how many names you have how can you
say yourself, and if you did would you listen?

And when in this journey the wind bends you forward
to study the map you mounted by the binnacle
to show the new shapes the earth gives to my despair
what does the map see when it looks up at you
and searches with its mindless kindly thing-light
the deep anxiety of every human eye? What do eyes do
while we read? The distractions haunt us,
we wake with an old prayer in mind, as mind.
And those natives staring at us, birds or witches,
the thick dark mothers half-compassion and half-rock,
waiting to hurt us into life. Why is it so hard?

One reading the map. One standing in the sky. One animal
who was always there. This is the voyage
to the center of the earth — *I tell you a secret consolation:*
she is Emanation. Faithful heart of the phantom,

sweet friction that lives to feed the empty wind
and make it our actual fire. Practice of the heat,
the road down. Smoke of fumaroles, a field of hurt,
the beak of Iceland tearing at my heart. I saw it once—
how hard we have been hurt, an island you.

We are tired of all this liberty. You bend forward
into the wind of information, you read like a prisoner
tearing through a wall with his fingers, words
you break to find the secrets of, daylight in the folds.
All science comes through this ill-fitting door.

28 October 1992

But how does inquiry welcome a stranger?
— Pam Rehm

It is not near or nothing is
and they always come searching

things come in threes

my father was not wrong
came deaths mostly
that way some weddings

funeral weather
on the long earth

or news
there is always news

my father my mother and me

2.
you imagine them balthasaring their way
over what had not yet you hope become a desert
maybe Petra of the Happy Arabians that pink
summer camp of stone by rock by
dream inhabited at dusk

they say there is no dusk in the desert
but they say anything that comes into their
heads

growing beneath their shoulders their eyes give
light.

3.

So I too would be a traveler

a mode of being here

with headphones on my ears
to hear my own kind of jazz
archaicizing tendencies of the cracked lute
the mud beneath my foot

so from time to time lie down in what is there.

28 October 1992

Bringing it closer at least the discernment
of the other the intercourse
broken "on the wheel" spun
by the glitter-gloved hand of

who *is* that lithe sojourner
whose torso enterprise suborns the eye
from its proper business of looking inside
(after all most of it *is* there, is incircled

where the bone house holds sage
mindfulness in ivory umber) and
turns it outward to such mansardry
as haunch in leather or a hand high.

That velvet personage is the other.
Have dread of this to see it different—
a wheel turns to make a head spin
— or see it same or similar. It is not

and is not not. It is the sum of you
and nowheres near you, it is what made you
and made you forget, it is your child
and mother of the instant, same

lost in distance so hopelessly close.

29 October 1992

THE IDENTITY

When you turn the light out
it goes downstairs

and what does it do there
it writes with an iron pen
on a very rough white wall
I press against it in the dark
I feel the white of it
harsh on my skin I press
against what it has written

Later I go up and light a candle
and stand at the window
safe from all the night rain
and I see what the iron pen
wrote on the pressed
wall has become my face.

30 October 1992

LIGHTS OUT IN THE ZEN MONASTERY

Man alone in the dark
alone in the dark.

31 October 1992
Mount Tremper

In search of universal Rules I talk

how can I talk I talk
to your mouth

the shape of your mouth listening
we listen with our mouths

how can there be quiet unless I talk

and the certainty is not about a towel
after breakfast a flower
I mean to return to you
from all those Lady the world found growing

intimate and free, the Tide of Union
the Freeholder of the Planetary Sphere
o I am young enough in foretelling
I want to taste your mouth

I want to be you listening to me
fervor (father) to be a centerfielder
always in far distances controlling
by my soft hands alone
the center of who it means

Change the vowel of the first suppose
Dream Land the filter
overcoming the specifics of the situation
how can one not desire what no one owns

a sun is happening is that it
a tea is drinking is that it
through Toronto's Chinatown a small dark fuzzy fruit
a longan or a lichee maybe is rolling across the sidewalk
into the neat gutter is that it

pain between my eyes is that it

eye between my eyes is that it
answer shouted in the snow is that it
broken lamp is that it
stone staircase is that it or the moon it aims at
is that it and all my failures is that it
fire extinguisher and bittersweet in a bowl and a cat
is that it is that it

the merchandise of feeling is freighted with forgiveness
the way the wood is stacked the finches at their food
thirty miles away my love is sleeping

and my heart neglects to be here
the crow of monasteries flies
symmetrical wingbeats slow
trusting this lower air of ours

the invisible fabric that holds our lives

*wind-weaver, will you stay at home
so everywhere?*

the light falls through the old meadow
by the green summer cabins
it is morning, milder than they threatened

and the firstlings meet us here, umber
Munsees stayed north to the Shelf of the Gods here
and noisy Skraelings subdued by dark resinous trees

here climb the spotted path
bluestone to the mild excelsitude
beyond the A-frames

and the Spirit lifted
edgeways off the camber of her lip
to say the name of him I love
who by so loving permits
the pretermission of desire into having

out here in the noon's moonlight
the empty plate that sates all appetite

31 October 1992

HALLOWEEN

Madonna sits in the shrine room
Changing one by one the color of her eyes.

31 October 1992