

11-1992

## novD1992

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*for Charlotte*

There is something to be said for a clarinet  
(Carl Maria von Weber,  
a wind you want to hear

warm wind  
so gentle all  
the way up my spine

from the mines at Falun  
where a crystal wife  
is waiting for me, a wife

waiting always inside the geode of the mind  
o when shall it crack open  
this hard fruit

to find your light  
all round me anyhow  
already lady

if I could see it so  
there is no distance  
no departures into the mythical darkness

dungeoned in guesswork  
and nothing heard)  
everything is here

everything is ready  
the stamina of being here  
with what the world is sounding

voice of a lake  
a spritely (which used to be spiritly)  
concord

with (everyday)  
our goings on (life music)  
our immense staying.

18 November 1992

## CENINEN, A LEEK

three of them in fact  
waiting in the frigo  
getting dry

should I try  
to make a vichysoisse  
the last

was a disaster  
I think the broth  
had lost its energy

or was it simply  
salt it lacked,  
the sacred ego

every beast possesses?

18 November 1992

## NOVEMBER CAT

*in mem. Elizabeth Stambler*

There is difficulty. The grey  
cat the color of the day slinks  
across the grey macadam still  
hunting for prey. I am not late  
for a funeral, at graveside a woman  
reads inaudible words, not even  
the heart can hear them. A book.  
A box of ashes in a little hole.  
Death in our world is mostly  
a matter of the weather. Is it better  
to leave all that we desire  
to scurry into its licit hole  
while we prowl, prowl, full of vigor  
and purple and magnificence and  
never forgive the world at all  
for being too big for our teeth?  
My teeth. An enemy is dead  
and turns into my closest friend,  
I stand in a miracle of clemency  
supposing she forgives me  
in the article of my feelings.  
I forgive myself — who else  
is there to forgive? Blackbirds'  
cantilena, leaves susurrus,  
learned words and dim apostrophes.  
We belong to no one, not even earth.

18 November 1992

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Your call-name

(of a dog endowed  
with family history, the Fancy

knows its own)  
is what they call you

summons from, that legal horror,  
that we can be called

and from that declaration  
never be free.

Tell me how we can move left  
left of the government

where no one can summons anyone  
but everyone can call.

Here, here is my name,  
you find it in your mouth.

19 November 1992

WAR

Decision that proposes  
a wolf at nightfall  
chewing on the bridge

night tallow rough-hewn  
granite heaped  
to hold the chain down

believingly a broken stream  
weather slew it  
a doctored cavern

we are caught in the world  
without spin we fall  
sightless into every object

19 November 1992

## HUNTING SEASON

Then bent as the veiny lion's virtù  
a glance over the endless tawny savannahs  
teeming with prey, these creatures  
have their own names, Christian,  
they have their cities you read as shadows,

they have their smoke. Wait on the cold road.  
It is a strange pleasure you tend with your steel.  
A noisy pleasure, a crude remark  
explodes into the trees and birds flock up  
in terror. As the animal you missed

disappears in the trees you feel forgiveness.  
Let it be that way, though it is only the air.  
Let it be that way, though the animal will die  
and you will die and the yellow leaves still  
cover up a planet where no one has ever been.

19 November 1992



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*for Charlotte*

frost shines on everything  
I go to school  
like every morning of my life  
and here *you* are:

what I am looking for, have  
looked for all my life,  
resting here  
kind as grass, calm as sunlight—

this is the Dilemma of the Morning.

20 November 1992

## THE BASKET

All the togetherings  
at one now

plaited like straw  
most intricate  
only fire can unlace

and leave  
ash coordinates

azimuth of grief.

20 November 1992  
for the Day 13 C'at

## THE PHYSIOLOGY OF WILLIAM BLAKE

1.

There is something pouring from the left fundibulum  
down over the suture and athwart the supra-orbital  
hard place the rock is looking for when it sings and it hurts

like the cliffs and scars of the Yorkshire coast cold  
as metal under the winter drag of clouds from Iceland  
coming to dine on your last remaining warmth

in my head. You are the image of loose clothes. You.  
You are an idea in the mind that won't stay in the mind  
thank you you are muscles you are mauve you are mine

I think but what is an idea worth an idea is worth a hand  
and a hand takes the pain away. Ridge over Neander Valley  
where it hurts like that and (now we know it) the ice

the ice comes back. Parallel patterns, like a crow in flight.

20 November 1992

2.

Gruesome if forgotten, the sulc is now. This cleft  
or cleaving, like an Orkneyman slicing cut plug.  
It grew there once, but the red screelings yammered  
and accused honest Christian men of colonizing.

The sulc is now. The ditch or fosse a hole might bend  
castlewarding among the somber green. November.  
A groove in the earth or pit or trench. A groove is now.  
It runs athwart the mind precisely differencing

what hurts me from where it hurts. Girls live there  
and gillies and vague gulls on myopic horizons. Hear them.  
Everything I knew I knew from sound and color—  
crossed city streets by sound alone. Are you muscle?

Are you dance and Africa and shake? How far a pilgrim?  
Slut Pocahontas they say. I find the sluice of her  
right down my middle. The grease of autumn game.  
A bare smell a kindled likeness smouldering outside the camp,

Adirondack march pronounced as best you can  
the simple purport of our tribe's exogamy, grab her who can.  
I never talked about anyone but me. This was my song  
the others (that world of men) thought was some *attitude*

but I thought nothing, nothing, do you understand?  
My only mind was body and it spoke. Lath and beaver pelt  
withy-built and rawhide shrink-dried around the frame.  
O Lord Jesus look my knees, round and juicy golden oozes.

20 November 1992

[A section of *The Physiology of William Blake*]

3.

And so with America, hymeneal, hiems  
harrying vegetation from from blue-green  
Labrador the blessed. This was my left cochlea,  
tu sais? This was madness when it stayed inside  
but music public. This was an arm laid in your lap  
most gentle, its elbow mid-thigh, its wrist  
coincident with your slim knees. O consciousness  
is where we walk and as we sit and this we twist  
turning our bodies glad from light to light.

20 November 1992

[A section of *The Physiology of William Blake*]

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The arrant  
or what fits  
inside the box  
is almost flat

flows from night  
to Philadelphia  
like a cut-rate  
river

I hear you  
crooning  
where people lean  
against the pole

hear you stalking  
where the stamina  
of living men  
controls

such things as sleep.  
Heart beat.  
Take my pulse.  
My shoes too tight.

20 November 1992

## THE ISLAND OF ST HELENA

I am reading about Napoleon on St Helena  
to prepare myself for the long defeat  
the fatal convalescence, the month  
with a full thirty days and each year  
has twelve of them and every day is yours.

Whereas we belong to everyone.  
Till now. When this noble little tyrant  
struts in exile on a ten mile rock  
waiting for the world to come to its senses.  
Like any artist, waiting for his time.

I am reading about Napoleon because I too  
will have a season to myself, to brood and plan  
and measure shadows scuttling down my wall  
and pray and give myself wholeheartedly to  
that special kind of lying called remembering.

21 November 1992

## THE REVELATION

I heard something waiting at the night  
and the book wouldn't let me

I heard someone running down the light  
and feared to read the word he said

I heard the moon climb back behind the sky  
and we were both weary of showing showing

ourselves and ourselves and nobody looking  
except poor hungry wolves and children with no eyes.

21 November 1992



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*for Charlotte*

I ask myself how it comes to be so new  
all the time this love of ours and  
why I always feel inside me strong  
inclination to say it and say it new?

It surprises and shocks me that  
all the great love poets never  
got around to mentioning you  
and I look in vain through all their songs

of good times and hard times their  
lovers gave them and never  
find your name, sometimes maybe  
the shadow of a woman's profile as she

turns as if to look at the ocean  
reminds me of you on the headland  
staring over at Gayhead with your heart  
smooth as a gull soars down to sleep

but that's just a resemblance and they never  
speak your name in all their busy recitations  
the history of love from alpha to where are we  
now in the alphabet, lambda? omicron? somewhere

where they have never reached and it's left  
to me in my handiwork to find you and say  
something true that will last till tomorrow  
and do it without the help of all the poets

the great ones who loved so noisy and so sweet  
all over the pages of half the books on the planet

and still never came near to saying who you are  
except sometimes I think that lost poem of Homer

I get a glimpse of from time to time where he sees  
for a moment between battle and sea storm  
the clear face of scareless Ariadne watching the sea  
knowing the worthiness of her lover is never the issue

only the worth of love itself unmeasured and free—  
then that image unlightnings from his broken book  
and I'm left in free space with you to say you  
somehow in beauty you are beyond the changes.

22 November 1992

4.

Suppose they are causes  
the soft winds of the antrum thoracicum  
where the heart hides, the literal.

Suppose they are conditions:  
the receptivity of furrows  
spiked through the doughy medium

you live in it, it lives through you  
and the two of you are buried in one name  
on the hillside in the south of France

between the snaking Rhone and a sad glacier  
unmade by August. These cantons  
are hollows where the rapture hides

and all it needs is a finger or a tongue tip to decide,  
decode, the frequent ecstasy of living systems  
spellbound by your touch.

Until this body even speaks.  
Lots of old books open to the double page  
where the stresses of old Germanic verse

remind you of how every blessed thing  
mirrors another and is mirrored by  
the floating answer across the verse divide,

ovaries coupled in the dark inside.  
Sit down on a chair. What you feel  
the ancients called Egypt, and said a God

himself by mother flesh and wit was  
carried there to hide. Hide in me.  
Hide in my touch. I am not to find.

*William Blake*

22 November 1992 [A section of *The Physiology of*

5.

There are the nearer stretches of the folded blanket  
lofted softly from below over the sleeping man

which is only one part of the man truly while the other  
divisions of his exalted Discord (our earthly tegument)  
stand in the cadastral records of the night  
guessing the boundaries of what will come to be.

He is in love with what will not come. He is in love  
with the skin beyond his reach, jism spurt from unborn stars.  
He is in love. Say so. His arms by undersurface  
sense the wind that eases between planetary destinies—  
this wind shapes countryside, a mole in a tussock hears it  
and shuffles backwards in its hole, having had enough music.  
We know where music leads, all of us do, and the trains  
of his childhood slipped past little Jersey towns  
with a finality like clothing slipping off a person in the street  
who is left thereby completely naked. Nowhere to hide.  
The pattern of consolation. The unlined sky.

In breath like this his sleep arrives and goes. Documents  
resist his fingers, they are paper, he is rock. The knife  
he had to leave at the gateway, where the fallen angels rest  
complaining of a weather they can only guess it.  
Fallen angels have lost the capacity for pain. *My hand*, he  
cries, he sees it before him resting on the ledger  
where all the real estate of Uranus is docketed —  
only two more volumes and he's at the end. Corridor  
cleanly with quick wind. Elevator doors open and close.  
Time is running out of space. My hand is there too,  
dear friend, trying to keep in touch with all the transformation.

22 November 1992

[A section of *The Physiology of William Blake*]

6.

That the phone rings all day long  
that the Blue Scooter wheels around Neptune  
on its way to the Sandstorm Galaxy  
where the bowl-shaped Chromosome  
preserves the seeds of time, inert

until they touch our juices. Prime  
our pump to the blood release. To use  
the juice of number — exclamation  
(tell a phone to ring, the hum  
unbearable, low baud rate,  
scant information given in such fire)

pour out the chalice your father handed.  
It is morning now and easy found up there  
yellow in silver, oro y plata. Stagger  
down the catwalks of the arteries to  
check the fletchy timothy grasses thick  
tall and arrogant along the meadows my sweet hair  
whose roots are corms or tubers good to eat  
—blue starch of living systems— over the marshes  
of the human body spanned by rights of mind.

What happens is seed fall, spring spurt, meek  
rye vernalities of (why never?) vascular hope  
priming (ever the pump) high-born speculation  
into the faraway. Where soon enough our noble  
stuff catches up. This is the answer to all previous  
answers, you brief and precious human life, you *flag*

raised in revolt against the repressive dark  
congested with political suppositions about  
the less conscious mind in alternate texts  
like animals or scaly fish or silver stars. Here.  
Here is the answer. The seed gets in your hair.

23 November 1992

[A section of *The Physiology of William Blake*]

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How can you know someone the

style across the room the *make* of them  
a word still young  
the way a bird in the sky  
is anyone

complete and perfect in that text  
but to know  
someone is another sense from seeing  
or from touching it is listening  
inside when they speak

their eyes have such clear voices  
someones have  
the way the sky has birds

and tell is where things are  
the temple of the world the all  
the places that there are to go

we are inside each other across every room.

23 November 1992



