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OCTOBER FUGUE

Almost too dark to seed
the word in black water

the wet, stone
weight of wind upon us
storm long as a prophet's
beard and shapely
in trees stand still
is it morning so soon
and still now?

The fugue

us all I ever wanted
the weather forecast
in the witch's oven

“the motive structure of all child-meets-ogre stories of that kind is the mother's deep hatred and resentment of the child, this clamorous sojourner who has wrecked the parent's life and filled it with annoyance and restriction. The parent sublimates—if that's the word—this rage into tales where the child stumbles (as once it stumbled into her womb) into punishment: eerie woods where it will be eaten by wolves or the Witch (which is of course the mother herself, taking her revenge, stuffing the child back inside, unmaking the whole sorry business). Or by giants, ogres, evil woodcutters—that is, by the father who got the whole thing started. But the child is saved at the last moment, as the mother becomes aware of

the transgressive tenor of her own thoughts, and tries to rescue the child from her own true wish to be finished with the child. The salvation of the child is always sudden and implausible, just as sudden as the mother's guilt about her vengeful fantasy."

(These words are drawn from an article by an imaginary psychiatrist I have named Ödön Fekete, to be published in a journal yet to be founded.)

So what is a fugue?

The mother-essence dancing
with the father-essence,

the fugue
every child is
entrances and exits of the twinned genetics

no wonder I love wolves,
those steel-grey resolutions on the tonic.

Brighter now, babes to begin—
the sawyer finds a living child
in the heartwood of the tree he felled—
this child has trouble
opening his eyes at first
but already knows how to speak.

His own language!

And home the sawyer carries him
the kid talking quiet all the while
his mouth close to the ear
of his new father—
all the words he learned
listening to the beast-sounds
in his mother's womb,
then the long silence of the tree
in which she trapped him,
then the long vocalise of wind in the branches

and so language came among men.

What we find
comes from us to begin with—
when we find it
it has come home.

So it is with the world,
slowly the child teaches language to the father.
By the first snow they can talk
still quietly together, about the weather,
then about animals, then the precession of the equinoxes
and the great machine where dark is made
to relieve the world each night
from the terror of unending vision.

The girl buried books in the ground
they never grew
but she read them anyhow
but the words were changed

things have meaning when they do
who am I she thought to tell them to?

I am already old as I will ever be.

1 October 2010

= = = = =

Craquelure, the shivered
crackle in the glaze
of old pottery, follow
the lineaments of fracture,
the gentle heartbreak in china,

so long you could spend
reading the breakage,
all the small differences
cry out in vain: this
should be your art,

to make a pattern and vex it
with the surprise of ruin,
a mass of lines to please the eye,
world without end,
the fragments always larger than the whole.

2 October 2010

ORIFLAMME

Aura flame he heard
and pictured it aloft
lifting the green man beneath
into the love-blue sky
two oaks or three ashes high
until his feet begin to glow
caught by the setting sun
come over the lawn-licked trees.

Then I spelled it out
and said I don't know its meaning
but only what it meant
when people used it,
the glowing orb of France, ancient
symbol of their royalty.

Oh the French, he said,
with all their names for things,
their beautiful cheeses.

2 October 2010

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And so we accept the thing that we become
never quite lost in the crowd, never quite easy.

Would someone reading all my work
know anything about me?
I'm not sure they would. I'm not sure they should.

3 October 2010

[dreamt:]

We sat together

no drama

no circulation

except that small-talk

they call making love.

3 October 2010

αγλαια

The festival is bright
those nights
we turn the lights on
to make the silence
sing.

Plainchant

ornamented
only by the lips
of those who sing,
picture each
a kiss-
God among angels.

We make beauty
for a reason. For reason.

3 October 2010

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So many things I want to know
about the me you think I am—
the subject, the citizen, what's left.

3.X.10

= = = = =

Pains walk through the world
looking for people.
Sit still enough maybe they'll pass you by.
And they can't stick to you
unless you offer them the glue.
Stumble glueless through twilight
into the dullness of mere health—
that 'mere' is our sanity.

3 October 2010

= = = = =

The Irish
the whole race
delusional,

god, they shouldn't
even let us drive.

3 October 2010

= = = = =

“When Adam delved
and Eve span”
already the woman
more skillful than the man.

3.X.10

= = = = =

The world itself is a conspiracy
no wonder we're paranoid

cosmos is a magic web we
spun and then forgot we did—

the import of Reason
is a red cloak
on a frail, pale traveler.

I might be a better person
if I liked sunshine more

but I am a cloud creature
an air dragon with a broken wing,

the mist is my mother.

3 October 2010

= = = = =

Causing light.

Genius lives in the stone

the local,

Sade's quarry

under Lacoste

six hundred years of graffiti

began to form the letters of some name

when will we learn to speak?

Spread her out in the wind

her arms be sails

her resistance

stops the earth right here.

Desire comes out of the ground—

understand this place

and all human hearts are yours.

Simple happy people there

worshipping a stone.

3 October 2010

= = = = =

Things got together and stayed home.

Tomato soup. Toast with crumbles of cheese.

This was called being sick.

It was interesting

in its way, the world

at arm's length, sort of,

like music from another room.

The fingers sometimes disobeyed the hand.

And sleep came crawling up the comforter.

3 October 2010

SOMETHING WHITE

Lifted from the sea—
a lighthouse is it
one of those shut down
by pale government,
only the cormorants
have commerce with it now
and there is no light

or is it a white arm
with its quiet hand
held open towards us
warning—yet strangely
not forbidding—that this
is a weird wave of time
we'd enter if we came
closer than our little craft
permits. And yet we must.

4 October 2010

THE IPSEITY

How can I manage to swim there
when I can't swim across a backyard pool?

this kind of water doesn't drown

when you swim among difference
each identity hurries to bear you up,
differences are dolphins from Arion's myth

keep swimming and we'll carry you there,
you think it's a shore but we know it's more,

you can only drown in what is same.

4 October 2010

= = = = =

So moving towards it lightly
nude arm over arm
while the fishy depths of sea
make sport of me and teach
vowelless languages we breathe in sleep—
remember everything you ever read:
it won't help but it will ease the pain
of hauling yourself to heaven
up the rough rope of now—
because Dante dreamed it and Orpheus
did it. A myth is a piece of bread
broken, shared among friends—

nowhere near there yet and never far.

4 October 2010

= = = = =

Or it was after all a lighthouse
and the dazzle of its function
blinded me with accuracy
until I supposed it was a hand
reaching out to steady me
in my dizziness I thought was sea.

And I was the cormorant
and I was the gull
and the storms came by and knew me,
sprawling flotsam up the shore
and rich-tangled weed, hummocks
of fucus like some cake
a sloppy neighbor brought for tea—
never go empty handed
to a friend's house when tea is poured.
That's the only law I ever learned
before I walked into the sea.

But is any law enough
or any cake or any friend?
And was it even me?
I move towards what I see,
the *mirror phase*, phrase,
the sentences of glass.

4 October 2010