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Carrying truth  
in a long basket yes  
truth is a loaf of  
new-baked bread  
warm under your arm  
walked past the new chalets  
the Gypsy camp by the stream  
all the way to your most  
ordinary house. That is truth.

28 April 2014

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Today I translate  
from an unknown Russian—  
the words (who knows?  
masculine, feminine?)  
liberal on tongue tip  
like a minnow in a pond—  
Look, my father said,  
a minnow! and I saw  
a live silver curl and be gone.  
What language was that?  
Where was she born?  
Does he speak with an accent?  
In whose mouth does she speak?

Today I translate  
an unknown landscape  
into hemlock and yew,  
I drag in all the things I like  
and leave out the boring stuff—  
a translator is a greedy child,  
spoiled brat, I want  
it to say what I want to hear,  
so there, my known Russian  
(honey blond hair, pale eyes  
standing by a blue canal)  
says what's on her mind  
and I write down what I please,  
she doesn't care, miles away  
in another religion, in love

with inappropriate companions,  
she has plenty worries of her own,  
I hear her every word with love  
then distort it, mouth it with love,  
misunderstand it, I turn her  
doubts into my lies, it's all right,  
it all makes sense eventually,  
the reader finally reaches out  
and holds her in his arms.

28 April 2014

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Not a cloud in the sky  
“not even one” (quoting  
Grégoire Aslan in *The Roots of  
Heaven*) I was going to say,  
then I looked up and saw a jet contrail  
stretched right over me from east to west.  
Does that count as a cloud  
or is that just human trash, something  
somebody left behind themselves here  
for the sake of being someplace else.  
a mere floating consequence,  
like a line from an old movie.  
A real cloud is always where it means to be.

28 April 2014

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Wind closes the book.  
Opens it again  
at another page.  
Fresh beginning.  
Bless me, mother,  
so I can read the wind.

28 April 2014

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Distant branches  
turn vague with growing.  
A blur of green beginning  
beginning.

28 April 2014

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Epic correption



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O know when it is

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At least  
Confederate soldiers

## NUDE

The warm is where  
they wear it—

photo  
of one more disclosure  
of what we have never seen  
no matter how long we gaze,  
the eye must need it,  
the light of the body of the other  
is air to the eyes' breath.  
It is unseeable, a sheen  
of hope around a glaze  
of seeming—the eyes  
reach out and touch nothing,  
we are starved for the sight  
of someone we think is you.

30 April 2014

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Sometimes brain wrong.  
Heat happens red scar  
scan turns against self  
as if all the roses in the tree  
don't mean you anymore.  
Or even themselves.  
How can we see those  
who have turned away,  
gone through the wilful door.  
Or is every door a suicide.  
I mean every death?  
The roses are still far from  
this spring, sleepy trees in rain.  
I need them to come back  
and say another word—  
we can never hear the last words  
what with the slamming of the door,  
the shyest girls have the biggest  
vocabularies. There is one  
explanation, briar roots among  
the rocks in Africa a long  
time ago, this thingly earth, these  
queenly distances, I have lived  
nowhere but your names.

30 April 2014

[Remembering the picture of Emma Bernstein on Gracie Leavitt's book]

## BALLERINA

1.

Examine her all over again. What does she know? The bronze of the small statue (a ballerina not by Degas) seems to walk on the windowsill. Are you listening to me as I try to speak? She (the portrayed dancer) is more a standing than a going, but what do I know about the speed of women? Of bronze? The words all run together as I try to think.

2.

Enough of doubt. It is time to take the candle out. It has given light too long. A room needs its dark. Bronze needs its shaping. The dancer, however, does not need music. Music is just a superstition. The dance should be the muscles answering to some thinking. Words or musics or shadows on the wall. Go, lovely body, talk with the shadows. Answer them. Music is a superstition. The body is a true religion.

3.

And when it falters? Even so. Invasive surgery or cutting things out and away, the body isolates itself from its parts and says *I am* to all of them, but few indeed of them can say the like back to the whole.

The heart can speak and the brain orate, and all the rest is fantasy and Sunday School, the saints the heart poays homage to, the gods the brain makes up.

4.

Oh those two! What dreamers, what schemers! I wish they could just lie out on the lawn in the rain, somewhere on Long Island, not too far. Babylon, maybe. Why would they name any town that? My grandfather owned property there, 'lots' as we called them, and I have no idea who inherited them. Bad blood flows wherever families are. It pours into the crucible where the copper melts, and makes the bronze strong. Such mixtures we are! And those two running the show, aren't they mixtures too?

5.

After the ballerina wakes, she falls softly, crinkly, to the quiet floor. Because dance is the body's sleep, its dream, its way of knowing everything. That's what the bronze is always trying to recall, that fusion, silent music, no meaning but to move.

30 April 2014

