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WHAT I REALLY WANT TO SAY

is about poetry (always) and architecture and music,
yes. How like
and how they use us
to make us become ourselves.

What i really wanted to say
is that poiesis and music make time pass
and architecture makes space pass.

Space and place, are they the same?
Place happens in space,
is architecture in a place or is it the place
itself happening to space.
The way music happens to time.

So there is usually a street and sometimes a fountain
—a thing that moves up and up while the eye reaches out and out—
and there's a girl walking by and another eating lunch on a bench
when a place is a plaza.

What i really wanted to say
is that the poem stretches on and on
like an avenue of mysterious buildings
who on earth lives in all those houses
apartments single rooms

who climbs down the stairs or stumbles at midnight,
who opens the brass letter boxes o my god
who are all these people
eating their lunch in the middle of the poem
and looking at each other and wondering what it all means
and then they come to the end of a line and decide
well enough of this it's time to go home
home to their room

What i really wanted to say
was that the word 'room' really means 'space'—
the German word for space is *Raum*, room, *Lebensraum*, room for living,
is there room for ling
in this poem you're writing
o poet and o composer
are you leaving space in your music
for someone to live in, really and truly
be alive *inside* your music,
not just some background noise,
not just some sad background-life while you drone on?

I know it's not polite to ask
but we sort of know what architecture does
rough and ready we inhabit it
and when we're lucky it changes us,
guides our footsteps and the way we feel
about doing whatever we're doing that brings us there,

swinking or swiving, a building holds all.

**So what i really wanted to say
was that these arts do something to time as it goes by
not just make it pass
as Beckett had his losers say, the time will pass by itself all right,
it knows how to do that,
or that is all it knows.**

**And do we know more
than what music tells us as it flows past?
We sit in the plaza on a marble bench and read poems to one another
whispering or waving our arms and why not,
somebody has to make things move,

make the shadows dance in and out of the shadows of great buildings.**

**But does time ever really pass?
Isn't time just a superstition, a flaw in our attention to the permanent?
And if it passes
can we learn how to stop it
and make it pool out around us
so that we stand or sit in the shallow water of moveless time,
this static stream,

or is it a salmon-leap of time up and out into space,
into room,**

so that when we see a building we know that time is safe there,
an artist's hour hammered into place
and we can be, just be.
Has he turned time into space?

What i really wanted to say
was there and back again,
the swell of music
held in the mouth of the poem
spoken to the girl eating her lunch
in the great nest of plazas
of many levels Steven Holl
built in China, a city in a city,
a poem someone is reciting,
annoying the poor girl eating her lunch,
my god how can I look at that plaza
and now start writing a poem,
a poem with musics and levels and fountains and food,

it's hard work to eat
chewing and swallowing
all the inward mysteries thereafter,
hard work
the poem and and the song,
Hegel famously remarked a building is a frozen song,
well yes, but everything is,
what i really wanted to say

was that everything approximates music
but a building is exact,
demands space move its hips and shoulders
this way and not that,

or is architecture also a chanceful music,
turning space into space
so that we can get lost for a long time
in corridors and pentagons and Mooish geometries,
the way Cage's 4'33" turns time into time,
our dear Christless fundamentalist,
our sweet raw Pythagoras,

turning common time into pure time-
time transmuted by attention—
we'll never be sure if he was the great Alchemist or the Wizard of Oz,
but the time changed. and stays changed,
he moved on to the next town
and left us with an empty room full of pure time.

We shake our heads and say Next time we'll do better,
we'll be ready for him, and dance to his tune.
But what does "next time" mean?

Can there be another time
after this time?
That's where poetry comes in,

and if quoting myself I should say again

time transmuted by attention

a measured , noticed time

is as much music as Biber is,

the glorious whine of whose strings

won't leave you alone for a second,

she looks up from her paper plate

and hears the time singing round her ears

spoken by the shapes and shades of great buildings

and now she knows, and now she's only now.

Can a poem, though,

such as I'm trying to make or bend your way now,

can a man outlast time?

Can it get where it's going before I get there?

When I was a child the greatest thrill

was riding on the escalator

Macy's Gimbel's Wanamaker's

floor to floor and always rising

and no one to stop you going up

and watching the people

on the way down, clutching bags

neat brown packages, content,

descending into ordinary space

while I rose up, finally reaching

the dim cool floor where furs were sold
and I turned back from the fear of dead animals,
what could it mean to live in a world
where animals die and their skins
rest on lovely women of a certain age,
that' why we hurry down again
to the ordinary floors, the street,
the paper plates littering the gutter,
the half-eaten sandwich, the poem
read halfway through and never finished.

but something was always going up,
even if we didn't have the wit or will to endure its beauty,
like James Tenney's electronic *For Anne, Rising*,
where the sound goes up and up and never stops that climb
but is always present, or Joan Tower's wonderful *Platinum Spirals*,
violin conquering time by rising always in one place,

of when the thunder walks through the valley
and everybody and everything knows itself
suddenly walked into by that sound,

invaded, persuaded, frightened, spared—

What i really wanted to say
was that I'm tired of poetry being a blueprint not a house
I'm tired of music being something that comes and goes

**I want the word to be a house
and the tune to be something you climb on and travel
but how can I say that?**

**How can words make you hear
or make a place you can actually walk across
reaching a wall you can lean against
warm in sunlight and close your eyes?**

**What i really wanted to say
was that poetry wants to close your eyes
and open them suddenly anew,
the way doors and windows too,
o envy of all poets these architect folk
who can build an opening wherever they choose**

**when how can I break open even a single
word to make you see?**

1 August 2013

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**I live in a dream
no place else to go
faces appear before me
then you're gone**

**the names linger
what did they mean
in themselves
what did they give me**

**as they flickered by?
and all the love and anger
they begot in me, all
that's gone too.**

1 August 2013

A Tract for the Old Calendrist

Moon moonth month

no other measure should we need

the sun is for kings and commissars

the moon is for us

the roots of the matter (the mater):

M N in Egypt: M was owl

N was waves of the sea—

mn* = man mind mens *meminisco* *humanus

humans are the animals with mind

animals that measure

animals that clock the moon's passage

animals that reckon by moon

Once in France I walked along the stream not far from Cavaillon

where the best melons come from, pale round sweet ones

and along the river bank some earth had subsided

exposing some bones tumbled down, and a skull regarding me;

word was that they were old, Gaulish or such,

I know they were white, white as the moon of course

for God's sake let us count by moons.

**As the brain in the skull
the soma in the moon—
in the Vedas the moon
was the chalice of semen,**

**SMN the juice of MNS
the sap of mind**

**and some mind in the moon
measures us.**

**To the moon the waters of earth rise,
the seas, yes, but not just sea—**

**the sap in trees, the lymph in me—
the tide speaks all the waters of our bodies**

by moon they rise and fall.

**So: the sun's business is with the earth,
and their transactions
make the seasons, the wind
and the electromagnetic waves pouring down—
they affect us, burn us,
would kill us if we got enough of it.**

**The moon is mild, is ours,
consoles the lover, lights the pilgrim's way,
illuminates the backdoor for the burglar.
The moon is for us.**

**So what is this Gregorian and Julian business of counting by the sun?
-Doesn't day-and-night tell us enough, tell us sun is all or nothing, Manichean,
lord of duality, patriarchy, government and salary?**

Abstain from sun worship!

Every day a Sabbath!

Every night the moon sings a different song a different sign.

This is a simple-minded plea for a lunar calendar.

**Begin it with the autumn solstice like the Jews and Greeks, or the spring
solstice like the Persians, just watch the moon and name it through the
seasons. Through your seasons, where you live. So we could have Lilac
Month and Rose of Sharon Month and Owl Month and Blizzard. We are the
authorities here.**

**You can go to the books and find dozens of lists of what American Indian tribes
called the moons of the year. The lists to my mind seem fanciful and
whitemanized. Here and there a name sticks out: Wolf Moon, Green Corn**

Moon, Dead Water Moon. I don't trust the lists. We don't have to. Read them, but make up your own.

We are the measurers. The moon made us. The moon wants us to know. So call the year anything you want, count from the building of Rome or the Birth of the Redeemer or the Flight to Medina or the Storming of the Bastille—it doesn't matter.

The year doesn't matter.

Only the moon is matter, material to us, materially mothers or masters us—remember that the moon is a woman in some parts of the world, a man in others, or man in some seasons, lady in others.

**And o, keep record of the nights,
the night is when the moon discourseth,**

**a dream has eyes
find them looking at you**

**then looking in you,
and when you wake walk around
seeing the world with those dream-eyes**

recall that dreams are as real as waking

day we share with many if not all

night is shared with the fewest

the dream is unshared waking

only you and the moon know the stuff of your dream

the streets you move along and who you meet there

beating the dream-drum to feed the moon.

Our soma feeds the moon, our dreams feed the moon.

Hence the magistry of art, and its great burden:

to share the dream with all, and master it.

2 August 2013

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**Danger of neglect
formulary of the rose**

**I live
the chance to speak.**

2 August 2013

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**Finding by self
another noose
around the ankle
hop to heaven
by leaving
and believing.**

**One asks: "Where are you bound, friend?"
Other answers, misunderstanding
all too well: "I am bound in my body,
my ankles yoked to earth, my fingers
clench of their own accord, sir,
I seem to be one spasm only."**

**The asker sorry he asked
sad at the answer
dares to ask again:
"Where are you going, then,
on this road we share?"**

"I'm nowhere but here," the bound man says.

2 August 2013

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**The water of life (*aion*)
is the quietest stream**

**of all the visibles
water most connects us to the world around
(you can't see oxygen, can seldom see air)**

and water is too pure to have a smell.

u

3 August 2013

M

for Larry Chernicoff

Our M began life as an Owl
outline of an owl M
curved wings
think of the pointy ears,
once was Egypt
hieroglyph, demotic
alphabet, meant *m*.
Owl, bird of wisdom.
mmm, keeping mum,
keeping secrets, knowing
gnosis, mind
of Athena, mum
of mommy, mother,
murder, mortal,
la mamma morta,
Mary Eddy's dread
of 'mortal mind.'
The owl
we fear as harbinger
of death, that wise
and final answer.
Spooky owl noises

midnight scares us
families moan,
the owl comes
the mother dies,
mors, m, m
that means me
too, do you mind,
my mother died
in August,
leaves me
only myself
she gave me,
mother dies
survives in
mm, mm my mind
means the M house
we come from
we come back,
night before last
an owl cried—
sign of fall
impending, my season
to get born,
what does one do
without a cry,
the mortal melody
cartoon of us all

rising and falling
babying and olding
and tottering and
maple leaves
mottle
soon the damp ground.
I saw my mother
on her deathbed,
didn't see her die
that night, a hundred
miles away they thought
she would survive,
but dead on her bed
quietly when no one stirred,
feast of the Assumption,
Mary, Mother of God,
vanished from earth
in her body into heaven
when she fell asleep,
the Dormition, far away,
Asia Minor, all the way
to heaven we know
is mind, memory,
poor motherless children
are we.

The owl
has come

**and flown away,
now you too are an orphan,
a mother's last gift
the sad liberty
of orphandom,
a lone lad in the sad
indifferent world
maybe. Morning
morning, mirror
mirror—and there
you are *I am*,
finally just you.**

3 August 2013