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STEPS (11)

catch them while they're thinking

the need is clamorous

an image

slides off the wall

and waits

an image waits.

Everything is waiting.

Monosyllables everywhere,

all the important stuff

speaks in one breath.

If a breath can't say it

it can't be said.

A flashlight on the moon

in other words

a hammer, a naked foot

a Roman arch in Gaul

in other words

a sparrow from melting

ice drinks this
very morning
in other words
in other words this fingernail.

Hope to have
so many kinds of sparrows
are they races
or little artworks each
the painted pattern
the price of beauty
gallery of air?

At least they're here.
The broken mirror
Mary's cat the blue
futon Elizabeth's
new Beemer shadow
of the full moon
not here. Not here.

Keep trying.
Like is like that.
Love is like this.

And be done with it.
The critic of the passacaglia
left during the allemande.
Things leave us with ourselves.
This is the sorrow of great art.

14 December 2011

= = = = =

You talk of secrets and explain that there is no secret that can't be told. Or there is no secret in what can be told. Or once a secret is told it enters into the aluminum world where the ordinary is orderly around us, and we dream. We alone dream. But aluminum doesn't dream. Hydrogen doesn't dream. What is dream for us is intercourse for them, the passionate orgy of matter that we call chemistry and teach (almost by instinct) to teenagers, as if they already dimly knew what electrons knew and how they flew.

But when the gom-chen, the meditators, speak of ordinary mind, *thamal gyi shespa*, they don't mean the everyday dream consciousness that walks us around. They mean the true basic radical beyond-all-contingency-and-seeming mind of pure awareness, ordinary in that nothing adorns or obscures it. The uninterpreted.

But I think there are secrets that can't be told. We can maybe name them: the secret of the hollow of the knee, the secret of the anus, the secret of the nape of the neck—secret here is secret knowing, intensely you but you can't say them. Sometimes they tell you their secrets but the words fade on their way to your mind. Sometimes you try to talk about them, you'll try to say He breathed on the nape of my neck and I felt...But you won't be able to say what you felt. Or you didn't feel anything—you heard the nape crying out its secret but the words of it died in the nerves of your throat, the pulses in your quiet neck.

What does the body know? What the body knows is what religion tries to reveal. The stars in the winter sky try to learn the intricate scripture evident in the human body, try to learn it and shout it out: the heavens declare the glory of God, some Bible says...and what could the glory of God be but the deep inscription of the body? And here is where words come in, those handy stars, they fit so easily in our mouths and ears. Every word shouts the mystery of the body. It is why we go on talking forever. *Gnothi seauton*, said the ancient maxim, know yourself. Or as we would say, Keep talking.

14 December 2011

= = = = =

How strange the
news knew me

gave me
something to say

I never have anything
to say usually

reading what happened
is just not listening.

15 December 2011

*(hearing about the death of George Whitman, who welcomed me in his Paris
bookshop in 1954, amid all the myriads he entered into the invisible college of the
New Word.)*

= = = = =

A man walking along a song

an empty house talks back

you go through the door

you sit at the table

you have said all this before

the cup tastes good

a table is very kind

but you don't know

something comes after

something before

it may have been a bird

or something you almost are

a friend's name

at the back of your mind.

15 December 2011

= = = = =

(Women make up the language
that men print
that's why
they spell them alumni)

15.XII.11

STEPS (11)

Bleak measure
or small lost things
saved by wearing shoes
we tread raw earth
it is almost music
the stuff we forget

2.

And comes back at midnight
eyes close enough to see.
We belong to each other
naturally, then decide
to live apart. This
decision is called language.

3.

I am lying
with the sky
the whole sky
covers most of me,
it goes me
to sleep
reading it,
there is a part though
of me it can't see,

all of the words
the same all
meaning different.

4.

I who am a young god
appear before you as a fat old toad
it turns out it's up
to you to know the difference

It takes so many years of living
learning things before a man realizes
he must already be an old man
before he knows he's a young god.

5.

Somewhere else I am waiting
for me to move
An empty house learning to breathe.

6.

We made it brittle
so it breaks
otherwise you couldn't say it
it couldn't mean a thing

7.

Infamy of old roads
never went anywhere
no such place as Spain
Santiago still is Jerusalem
we all are just Romans
just remembering.
Nothing is as it was
but it's all still here.
Delicate features
of a frightened girl
a fairy tale
telling itself in the empty woods.

15 December 2011

= = = = =

Are the roads yet
sparrows hawks over
sounds come to think
too thick to be words

yet there used to be
a miller here, his work
the broken millrace now
a heron stands in the shallows

the season says so
time breaks
in bark and seed
bivouac on the moon

the side we can't see
where atheists come
back to life among
amazing mirrors

the void of space
makes music too
there are no roads yet
all seeing and no going

all knowing
and never being done
our doubting hands
oily with ritual.

16 December 2011

= = = = =

Little truths

pants cuffs wet

birdshit on a stone bench

autumn end all

their bodies perfect

snug in your mind.

16 December 2011

= = = = =

So many things
turns out can't forget.
Inks has a little more memory
but it is death for a word to be wet.

And when all this has been forgotten
all this will still be true
all we ever are is contradictions
of an undiscovered rule.

16 December 2011

= = = = =

Messenger juice
arbitrary tables
come down from the mountain
again and again

till finally a law to live with
shimmers on the stone
a law I can call you.

16 December 2011

WHY POETRY INSISTS ON DEALING WITH THE SAME OLD THINGS

Tree: something bigger than we are that we didn't build.

Mountain: even bigger, that we did not make.

Flower: something that comes by itself.

Wind: something that comes and goes.

River: takes everything away and still is here.

Sea: constantly coming towards us and never leaves.

16 December 2011

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The need to wash.

We come soiled
through the world.

To soil: to bring something
in contact with the earth,
the dirt beneath our feet
or the dirt that comes out of us,
the numbers, the things
we dare to think. The words.

To come in contact with the earth
pollutes. The farmer
is doomed. Environment kills.

2.

But does a fish
wash? Mites
and sea-lice
vex the scales.

But they are people
too. What is it
about water
that is always clean?

3.

We hunted
we poured
the blood of what
we killed to eat
solemnly onto the ground,
we fed the earth
and pulled nothing out
except what grew to us
by itself, of itself
came to our hands.
Soil in those days
was soul, was precious
skin, delicate, due.

4.

Find all the letters of my longest name
in chemicals your father carried
down into the mines to hide. Falun.
where the lover waits, a crystal man
undisturbed by time. How can we
ever cure ourselves of now?

5.

We are washed in history
soiled by memory,
memory comes out of what happens.

Apocalypse answers us: be
washed in the blood
blood of the lamb
marks us, we are the pure
who never hurt the earth,
pure Brahmins, flamens,
a smear of blood on our door,
the Death Dealer passes us
by. As if to say a crow
picks at what we've left.

17 December 2011

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Not everybody likes to run.
The road gets where it's going
without a single movement.
Be like the road. Get there
without moving. Be there now.

17 December 2011