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## **LOT'S WIFE'S SWOON**

**though we are passing near it  
the orbit will not intersect  
the stupid daydream of our love affair  
he reasoned and she concurred  
thinking about something else  
all the time. And Lot's wife wept,  
her salt tears trickled down  
to form the shore we stand on  
now when every sea is dead.  
Thank the Japanese, thank the Bible.  
the crass merchants who have trained  
their ears not to hear the millions cry.  
Lot had been warned. The angels,  
those effete but virile messengers,  
told him a world without kapital  
is a dead drear world,  
nothing there but fruit and trees  
—get out of town they said,  
before the fires of love  
come raining down to make you feel  
again. But Lot's wife felt. Her name**

**is not given in the official transcripts  
but we know she had a name  
formed on the name of a flower—  
not so simple as lily, maybe, more  
complex, like asphodel or primrose,  
let's call her Violet, she turned back  
again and again to see the town  
fill up with dancing and delight  
loud over the brackish lakes around  
and she cried No, I will stay with music,  
with heavenly fire, I will give savor  
to all the words and foods and dreams  
forever. Here I stand. But Lot hurried  
his daughters away to get them  
enrolled in the choicest schools.**

**7 February 2014**

## **PHILOSOPHY & POETRY**

*I think with my mouth*  
is how I say it  
the thing they strive for  
poets and such, we  
think with language, let  
the words think for us,  
like old women letting their  
strong sons work for them.

**8 February 2014.**



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**Castaways hours  
Springheel Jack  
blood on the plowshare,  
trick of the light**

**ponder lightly the  
apple cores tossed  
out for deer  
hoof prints in the snow**

**house next door  
empty, one light  
in upstairs window**

**all birds gone  
a hawk is by —  
burlarious sunshine  
empty room—  
whose light is that  
no one sees by**

**8 February 2014**

=====

**So many wonders in one—  
the sea brings all back  
you thought you lost  
you only found**

**your body squeezed together  
to fit through the air  
this tiny world  
no wonder you're  
always apologizing.**

**8 February 2014.**

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*clowns know emptiness takes time*

—Mikhail Horowitz, “Beckett”

We sailed from Portsmouth to Le Havre —  
that was then, my languages were nugatory,  
fragmentary, sintered at too low heat  
crumbling as we speak. But France  
was the same old wilderness of loveliness,  
one gorgeous glimpse after another  
like a sentence in Henry James.

Who knew a straight line could hold  
so many curves? Then I was young and wise,  
knew all kinds of things I had no right to know.

Sixty years later, this year, I have learned  
some of the meager lessons

Time is supposed to teach.

And emptiness is best of all,

my hat slung on a brass hook on the wall.

hook's shaped like a duck and I'm still in love.

8 February 2014



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**Cast of temblors  
quake soon hereby—  
I see the fault lines  
in the sky**

**the seams  
                  come open  
on the person up there  
the bare skin of beyond  
shows through—**

**person person I know thy name.**

**9 February 2013**

=====

**Because air has a geology of its own  
the trees investigate  
how else would branches find their way  
just where they do and not otherwise?**

**Character is destiny, indeed,  
but character fits inside character,  
a self is what is left over from other.**

**9 February 2014.**

## **(THOUGHT EXPERIMENT)**

**I have met people from the interior of Asia, who, coming to this country or Europe and encountering Christians and Jews, supposed without question that judaism was some kind of Christian heresy. There are lots of Christians and not many Jews, and the Jews were distinctive, careful of their difference. Natural for Mongols to think that the smaller came from the larger, as most things do.**

**What if it were true?**

**The oldest Bible in the world, the Codex Sinaiticus, is written in Greek, not a trace of Hebrew in it; it was written in the fifth century A.D., What if that were the first Bible, the true original. While the oldest Hebrew Bible, the Bible in Hebrew and Aramaic, that is, the Aleppo Codex, was not written till four or five hundred years later.**

**Could this be the real genesis of anti-Semitism? Christians are angry at Jews because the Jews left them, absconded to some purer condition? The Jews might, like the Protestants a millennium later, have decided to go back to what they took to**

**be primitive, the unchanged uncorrupted beginnings that they found to their mind represented in the earliest pages of that strange gnostical Greek book called *Genesis*. What if they translated all that into Hebrew or much of it and decided like Protestants a millennium later to go back to that word and live by the word alone, void of priestcraft and Popery? Is that why Christians were angry at Jews? Was Luther's notorious anti-Semitism just the anxiety of the belated?**

**9 February 2014.**

**All a poem is  
is a thought experiment  
primed for music,**

*an idea you can actually hear.*

**9 February 2014.**

## **SNAKE**

**Sanded image**

**small sand-colored**

**quiet sidewinder**

**up Echo Canyon**

**try to be at peace**

**with that pale difference**

**all flesh moves towards warmth —**

**I rubbed my finger on the glass**

**he came and rubbed his chin against**

**we were together those few days**

**never elsewhere always here —**

**the thing that fears me so I fear —**

**slim defenseless muscle with a mind**

**on the thought of you**

**I thresh out my awe.**

**9 February 2014.**

=====

**Something has to begin  
because alwaysness. Burnt  
leaves of November lie beneath  
February snow – you understand?  
No. You’re telling me  
what happens, I want to know  
but never did but could  
the snow on fire, the child  
lecturing the rabbis in the shul.  
All that happened already, so  
you need a new religion?  
Necessity is religion enough for me.  
The old have contentment  
but no patience. Paradox.  
Says you. With only  
a few years left to live  
who has time for doubt?  
Shall I wait for time to coursen  
them, should I give them a chance  
to doubt even me?**

**9 November 2014.**

=====

**As if there were coconuts say  
or half-ripe mangos clustered  
on a market stall somewhere  
you are not supposed to be**

**because you'll start dreaming  
and when you dream you need  
always desperate need to find  
some way to get home right now**

**you're always somewhere else  
so far away from the airport  
and you've missed the train  
of course, all that fruit heaped up**

**and you never get to eat  
you've done what you came  
to do, why can't you leave,  
why can't you ever eat in dream.**

*9 February 2014*



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**Born with a diamonds  
once? Or in my ashtray  
1972 Los Angeles a stub  
of some woman's cigarette—  
how could anyone with so long?  
Lipstick on unfiltered tip  
crimson smudge on white soft  
dim shreds show through.  
Why is memory, darling?  
How long does the past go on,  
carrying us, blue with longing  
into impossible eons  
built of my meager tomorrows?**

**9 February 2014.**

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**Something comes later. Cup  
with Chinese words on it  
“characters” in columns.  
And some women in flowing  
flowery dresses walking  
quietly down the sky  
towards me and pass by.  
I drink from this  
for twenty years.**

**9 February 2014.**

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**Tribal Council. Meet in the interior.  
Antechamber of the spleen, sorry,  
you lost yours in a VW mishap —  
most common trauma, live without,  
meet somewhere else. The car  
is ectopic. Now that your trees  
are somewhere else your EEG  
is what is described as normal,  
a citizen, a mortgage owner,  
churchgoer, consult the Pandects,  
memorize poetry, like to swim.  
Neurotrauma is the non-stop dream.  
Bronze medal in telling the truth —  
it is supposed to rhyme, to be  
as easily remembered as rain  
but you made it complicated  
at the last second, like the remorse  
of a suicide as the silk tie digs in.  
Choose another meeting place —  
the body is all used up.**

**10 February 2014.**

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**The thing is can we choose  
to be different. Tenth Avenue.  
shows the way. Money  
changes everything but itself.  
That's why museums are so imposing,  
palaces of art or reminiscence,  
Pergamon, Samothrace, Nineveh.  
I choose and choose again,  
elbow on chair arms, hard  
wood and a poor memory,  
could never remember my lines  
so still have to make everything up  
to keep you company in time.**

**10 February 2014**

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**Everything turns pale.  
This winter wonders me,  
skateboards buried  
under drifts — I miss  
the harsh grinding music of their,  
wheels, the crumbling  
concrete, the broken steps.  
The world was young before I came along,  
old Hiems argued, but I know better  
everything was always as it is right now.  
Flip this switch to invent electric light.  
Then forget it all tonight  
when cave bears still infest the dark.**

**10 February 2014.**

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A word left to speak it  
4 AM and from a dream  
my father left me, walked  
out in his white T-shirt  
into a rainstorm “for  
a little walk “— I wasn’t ready,  
no shoes, couldn’t go  
with him. Was I angry  
he left me? Left me again?  
Would he ever come back?  
There I stood in a big  
half remembered unknown house,  
looked at furniture, found my  
raincoat hanging on the staircase  
waited. And I called, called.  
The trees came close to the house  
the rain stopped, two girls  
walked far away from a quiet  
party , midnight, how lost  
I was, how serene. And here

**I was, alone in this town too.**

**Nothing to do but wake.**

**Despite all that rain**

**my mouth was dry as death.**

**10 February 2014.**

