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= = = = =

I can busy myself beside a small lantern.

—Bethany Ides

But compassion is an open wound
the Lama said. the bacteria
of otherness get into your system,

you care about something out there.

Fruit, something to eat, a woman
or a man. The otherness gets in
and you start to care. You care
for more and more until

until you fit the world
the way a cheek fits an open hand.
Palm of a hand on a cool cheek.
You feel. You want to see
what you feel. It is there.

Maybe it is there. You care
for there. You light the lantern
it is hard, you need matches
one after the other until
it goes. The flame comes.

You smell the hot tin, green
tin with glass faces, four
sides of light, you see
whatever is there. It touches you,
say, a hand on your cheek.

The pieces of an experience
fit together neatly. That
exactly is how it happens.
Everything. Your cheek. The hand.

15 January 2012

STEPS (8)

No picture of
tells true

but pictures do

it's hard to start
without an element

stepladder from the heart
to a ceiling fixture
that gives light

light makes sound

from it all depends

I give you steps

Stufen

I give your steps

Stiege monumental

outdoors and true

as stone can be

a fountain in it

slippery in winter
but cool in summer

sit on what I give you
give you what is yours

climb

once we had chariots
miracles of horse design

there were no boundaries then
the glass was full
but none would drink from it

until your mothers came
in virgin latitudes
beyond a bird

we were white with miller's dust
brown with his bran
we were red with beast blood
yellow with autumn

before we came
there were no colors here

we gave the blush of scarlet to the rose
and turned the sky blue with some of our eyes

on the way

on the way to you

the voices were of before us

their mandolins in heaven
their couches deep-cushioned in sateen
whereon they sprawl to dine on us

they still let us listen

but try to be now
try to tell what a girl needs to know
to keep herself safe
from my insinuations

from her 'own' mediated desires

teach what is actual

to the mindstream of the self
not what is implanted by society

is there?

is there really?

the influences of corporeal bodies

upon us

mass

can she ever even?

can this one tell?

the steps are cold in winter

but still sit down a minute

a human body's warm enough to heat the world.

16 January 2012

=====

It

is always asking

each and every you—

look up the words one at a time

be a child of any text

never more complicated than the next word

what is life without perverse desires

that is desires that are just your own

that's where linguistic speculations should take you

to take the clothing off your alphabets

and be the body only you can be.

16 January 2012

= = = = =

When I come to visit you

I won't wear a hat

I need to scream to you scream at you

just hear the sound of my

voice the sound of my body

without all the fucking words

just hear me

when I come into your house

all the windows break all the doors

fly open the lights go out

and everything is very quiet

till I scream

and nothing will happen till you hear me.

17 January 2012

= = = = =

Caught out by meek snow
the day dulled a little
bluejayed hedges thick—
not for nothing are they called yews

Some seem forever
but falter between
one dream and the next
by snow-melt gospel

such stuff the sun
preaches all the sad
ladies on slippery pews
the thrones of time

we also wake from
nothing sure but
nothing missing either
so the seeming ending

somehow fits the seeming start.

17 January 2012

= = = = =

Those Europe towns
with sidewalks few
and husedoors open
right on the cars
go by too fast
from the time
streets had only to be
wide enough for thee and me.

17 January 2012

= = = = =

Walking the dog without a dog
took so many years to get here
across the street and up to meet
the old road coming down

*

And now are trees
at least
the bird talkers
the upright friends
some danger they
are the sirens
I keep repeating
whatever they tell me.

*

Meek new pastoral
with no shepherdesses
or even shepherds
only the shadows of big
birds—hawks, harriers—
float across the rocks
the lonely love

leads me here.

*

People who live among trees all their lives
don't see them. Don't listen.
But you, an exile from the grey machine,
delight in their different samenesses.
You try to listen wind in your ears
who knows whom you hear,
just grammar talking in your underwear.

18 January 2012

NYQUIL

Woke from peaceful sleep
my coughs all night suppressed
were waiting for me
all at once fierce as sunrise
I choked on metaphors,
calmed, calm, the lawn
stifled in sunlight,
cold. Cold.

19 January 2012

= = = = =

So many plans
for one young mind.
Engraving. The grave,
the doors, the garden shed,
the lost republic,
the names Atlanteans
gave their ships.
Look at me even now—
how would you know
where I have ever been?
I don't fill out questionnaires.
I have stopped reading Greek.
They still get more beautiful
as the sun starts to go down.

19 January 2012

= = = = =

I need density back
give me thick-lipped Muse
this is too easy
I rush myself into fever
to be clear
to tell all the news
to all the yous
who don't want to hear
how hard a tree is
how big a horse is.
Give me hard
words again
to talk about soft things
and we'll all
live through the all
too understanding night.

19 January 2012

= = = = =

The imagination is also a child
playing with its things. With things.
Sometimes the names you learn
come before their things. Wild
excitement when you first can
fit a name you heard to some
thing you just met. This
must be a calla lily. This must be a frog.

19 January 2012

= = = = =

Dear Kate
of course
old enough
to feel younger
because my armor
falls away
I know a little
and know a little
better who I am
so there's a little
bit less fear
that makes me\
pliable again
at risk of feelings
never stop feeling
and now I'm less
judgmental maybe
a little infantile
I feel vaguely 17
with everything still to do.

I forget all the books I've written, all the wives,
places, planes, seas, violins, city dawns and country
midnights, forget it all and it's all new,
all waiting to be done.

Or else like this:

I've amassed all my material—now it's time
to get to work. I have to say everything I can say
because if I don't say it, who will? It won't get said—
then where will we be? Where will you be
if you don't hear everything only I can say? We owe
each other. And where will I be if you
don't say everything, everything, only you can say?
Each person a unique instrument, a pioneer
loaded with information about the unknown country
we're still children in, every word counts,
we're building the world mind by saying our own.
Tell me tell me tell me tell me.

19 January 2012

= = = = =

Each day I revise my conception
of what a poem is
so what I've written that morning
can be called a poem

something worth giving to you
or god or enlightened mind
someone who knows it all already
but loves seeing our lips move as we speak.

19 January 2012

= = = = =

Cusk is a kind in fish
caught off the Cape
hard to have here
who wants to carry
all the way anywhere
such a thing, a stew
gets made from it,

a wheel's not for eating
the distances mean something,
what is far away
should stay there
the size of the body
says.

19 January 2012