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51.

Let men praise the awkward revenants
they stalk around in old Confederate uniforms

tattered as Chickamauga but they speak
and what they say is harsh to listen

but poison also is what dreams are for
it's not all kiss me and go to church

the toxic narratives that spell my sleep
leave splinter images in the gaping mind

awoke too late to close their eyes
so there the pictures fester, rotting fire

water built of angry crystals broken air
but still the gentle zombies saunter

through cornfields under moonlight reading books
their hands in charge of where all lost words go

commissars of disappearance and forget
this time Æneas breaks his gladius

does not plunge it into Tuscan Turnus's breast
a good enemy is a precious friend

rise up and contradict me while I can
for potency is weak among the living

all libido is borrowed from the dead
they ache their dreams out as our desires

rare bird of sunshine capering on snow
I see all the ghosts but miss their names

if you know someone's name they can call you
so I am safe a little from their yearning

though I love the way the shadows angle with the light
every sky is a temple every dream a broken law.

1 March 2010

= = = = =

Cast another before me this way on the bed
and tie her hands with Sulka ties
just like an old ad in amber magazines
but wake before the wind begins to hurt.

1 March 2010

= = = = =

For whom is destiny
we each are born in different wars
and so we're linked with populations—
I was born in Ethiopia
when the Romans shook with fever—
Italy was the only European nation
that colonized a Christian county, crazy—
and I can no longer read all the books I wrote
because all the time the alphabets
are changing in my eyes.
Cut the ad out of the magazine—
adore any face that lets you look at it
and never makes you answer.

1 March 2010

52.

Who are these faces who walk through the wall
whose are these willful eyes bore into your heart

images images apples from no tree

I bite your wrist to keep us both from speaking

as if the body is the cure for thinking

as if the thing you think already holds you in its arms

as if we knew how to dwell in this place

when this place is waiting for some other

too many too timid too aftermath bold

too radical too sell-out too Moscow too old

every music sings I can't help you

except I make the hour go away

leave you with a shadow

a kiss is a shadow left on the skin

after the light went down to die across the Nile

where we Momentarily Extinguished Animals repose

we read the dark in limestone patience
a mind someday will recall us

and out we prance with skin and names
drenched with the one last rain of winter

a vulture will fly over every one of our heads
and serpents whisper curious prophecies

all our fear is lodged in them from the beginning
they give us back a little of it shock by shock

they keep our terror safe for us and leave us free
so all our fears we can let go as language

it wasn't the apple did Eve in it was talking
to Adam to snake it didn't matter talking sinned

but this is Egypt where the sky turns round
where the river whips out of the mountains

flows north like the Walkill the devil river
no wonder all that art and anger

women bathing in the reeds in the shallows

chase most but not all of the agony away.

2 March 2010

53.

I want to be from where I'm from
the problem is to be the place I am

no one faces as many faces as I do mornings
it is another person every breath

no wonder we say but there is wonder
think of where the alphabet finally led us

to a cross^t or a cry^o or a broken old man^z
but the images lead us straight to hell

no through hell I heard her saying
lift a voice a little and the table rises

roses topple over a wineglass fills in midair
the cup evades the hand the alcohol evaporates

something gold inks in the shadows
it is your old neighborhood criminal with cold

you dream how warm the pretty girl next door
busy at the looking-glass tending to her acne

no one wants the world as much as you do
everything you see is a part of your body.

2 March 2010

54.

at Merano, for E.P.

He was sanely happy at the birth of this child I think
nor does Montaigne counsel bloody-mindedness

I have not read far yet into the tulips
I'm still just a pastoral assassin of dumb ideas

lyric loud from random mountains
look what he carries in his hands

a stone you can actually speak
we stood with Mary on the parapet

half-Guelph half-Ghibelline and her father's
voice never far from the ear

voicing things giving their own voice to things
hard hearing but Hagia Sophia rises from such sound

there is no building bigger than we hear
the chair we sit on had been wrought by him.

3 March 2010

Preface

If you find this book in your hands
it means it was supposed to come there

was written with you in mind
you, really you, this is all about you

read on and learn about yourself
from someone who knows nothing but you.

3 March 2010

55.

Follow your own femoral artery long enough
you'll find yourself and it in the body of another person

this sometimes called love was called by the ancients the Red Thread
stitches life together with itself you wake in the mountains

the girl brings you small gentian flowers you go on sleeping
she says Spring is here and you dream of Old Persian verbs

girls are those shadows that leap from cliff to cliff
heavy smell wakes you peonies their heads busy with ants

the Long Island Rail Road glides through Babylon
but you can see the sea and all the walls are gone

I have a snapshot of you doing it
you can't fool me it was a beech tree in the snow

they took pictures of clouds artisans to the last
I carved this motto above your kitchen door

no wonder you don't love me like you did
each weary day intolates repose

scares the daylight out of ordinary falcons
see them scoot across the learned page

This Woman Will Eat Your Shadow
there was no one left beside the tracks

freight cars were full back then but of what
name a president in whose reign there was no war

why do we call great those who killed the most
it is the moon that makes men do it

the fact that we elect the killers makes it worse
at least with kings it's not our conscious fault

are we there yet every argument is circular
so is the sun you sneer but only for us

in itself it has no shape or limit no form
it is a gold sound matter shouts in eternity

it makes the greybeard barley grow down here
even in mountain valleys far from easy girls.

4 March 2010

56.

Find my way back to your hand
for you used me better than another

God's children waiting at the purple gate
to learn your password sojourner

they want to play with you tonight
they want to lick your salt.

4 March 2010

57.

They barely keep the name straight
though each name is written on the sky

later they fall for some new religion
the history of finance is what they try to hide

Egypt money Sumerian real estate
so what did a Roman think about all day long?

or is thinking all day long
a later development in human nature

evolution is a lightning bolt
change is slow to happen but it happens fast

or am I wrong to call this thinking?
I know nothing but I know it well.

4 March 2010

= = = = =

It isn't always waiting
but when the bus comes
no more smoking
except what the sun is doing
up at the top of the street
an agony in sea-fog

How many days doing the same thing
How many days asking how many days

4 March 2010

(thinking of St. George at 7:45 on a late winter morning)

58.

Day of quarrel no man tiger knife knife
spill an island off your chest and spit

mountains are always trying to escape from you
exaltation is a blue evasion waves in the sky

catch stars if you like children do as they please
they haven't learned the rules of being wrong

if everything weren't possible words would be useless
the aurochs would meekly gore the sullen sheep

but everything must change we call out names
and the sky falls down wakes up in bed with me

the otherness of anything is the glory of god
but some hawks relent and let the sky feed on us

money is like that too tries to make me touch her
warm in some pocket imagines far destinations

to die in India among mangoes to spill in Spain
me I use cash to but my way out of dreams.

5 March 2010

59.

Embedded in the actual
one dream's as good as another

the window breaks the dove falls in
stunned but unharmed the messenger

why do we call it morning when the love is less
that whispered all night the lactic acid loose

renewed the work-stunned animal inside
it perches on your highest branch and answers

everything is an animal starting with you
every stone is full of life just listen

doubt with whimsical tweets
in this world everybody has to read

all talk's text messaging
to knife through all our noise

alas the redundancies of art

we have to haiku to meet at the bar

redundant rendezvous of art

I've been in this saloon before born beneath that chair

learned to read from studying the hips
of seated drinkers or propped up at the rail

the human shapes are letters try to spell
tweet for all to read the axes of desire

the personal zone I've got to target
to get through this barrage of thinking

lift your pretty little cold reluctant hand
warm it with my mute anxiety

all the while we read and read side by side
then on the bed *the way dead bodies fall*

faint with information we resolve
this time it must be paradise again.

6 March 2010

60.

Love the dove right back and why not
my business is to reciprocate

sensuous input with language behavior
keeps you busy every minute of my day

fighting the agony of laziness like the lady in the play
every day of my life I'm late to school

for there is no end of the prime material
I was born in a workshop full of every tool

isn't it horrible when we stop to think
we like people because of how they make us feel

isn't it horrible when we stop thinking
I love her for the use she makes of me

of these old russet ridgy bricks
made by humans with mud and fire

we build a road each day another
furlong further on the way to heaven

what's that? a place where all are citizens
by birthright resident yet by neglect estrayed

I have to prove to everyone in charge
that I was born in this borough and still live there

and whenever I say there I mean here
when I say here I mean everywhere

ask me more interesting questions after all
you were born with my passport in your hand.

6 March 2010