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## BRUCKNER

Something  
in the back of the mind,

the old shed, shack,  
corner burlap  
sack of potatoes

we poor men eat this.

Not now. Something else.  
Now is paper.  
Scissors.

A whole orchestra  
trying to remember.  
Who were we when we were?

Sometimes sun stuns.

He falls off his horse  
all the way into the sky  
down,

if you think  
everything is a matter of distance  
and no unit  
of measurement  
measures us all.

No measure.

Immoderate music  
a cloakroom full of violins

but I wanted amber, the umber  
of shadow on suntanned  
women also trying to remember

everybody was who everybody was.

Now if you get lost in this music,  
this knot-browed deep-breathing kneeling music,  
you'll be in a place where everything is found,

why should I bother you  
with imagining  
to make you remember  
the everlasting Christmas of the heart

music is always people on the move  
but where are they going?

where the star fell off its sky  
and came to us  
and we listen,

can I wear you on my hands  
can I touch the world by you  
can I pick it up and bring it home?

Home is the hard word here,

to live at last in the word  
or even the sound of a word  
the realest estate

to live in your word.

Your Magdalen mouth.

21 November 2008

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Why don't I credit you, you're a boy, and  
boys just mess around with words. Girls  
tell the truth, always, even when they lie.  
Every word out of their lips is God's  
own truth how could it be otherwise?

*This is a postcard from the world.  
I am sending it to you on 21 November 2008*

## AN OPERA FOR CHARLOTTE AT HER TURNING YEAR

Suppose there were a uniform men could wear  
to say their hearts belonged to such an one  
and to no other. Suppose old-fashioned language  
took off its dusty coat and closed its eyes

and made a wish by the Fountain of the Truth,  
tossing silver alphabets in to calm  
that gaudy noisy turbulent upwelling  
that soaks the betweennesses of things

so they stick to one another and there we are.  
We would know then what we need to do.  
Sky-blue, like Robespierre's culottes,  
or mud-brown like Prince Andrei's shoulder blades

and him looking up at heaven empty as a hand.  
Radical chic. Time is an aging dancing girl  
who's lost her castanets. Thinking is the only  
weapon the poor have to strive against the rich

but resentment blunts the edge of thinking.  
Or green as Esmeralda's petticoat. Or pink  
like the pulp of overripe bitter-gourd,  
the knobby cuke called karela in India.

Or with stars on our shoulders and straps  
from sternum to the small of back, ribbons  
sliced along the brave left chest, and a hat,  
a hat, no warrior without a hat. Make mine

a green fez, I am a mature man still faithful  
to the Sultan of incremental light.

I think the music must be over now, I hear  
nothing but applause, sounds like shallow waves

shilly-shallying on a pebbly shore. Up there  
out of sight some woman is bowing  
bold as a man and her arms hold flowers.

Tribute. And bells on her toes. The Countess

has chosen at last, decided she wants both.

Because both is the same as neither, midnight  
nears and she wants to be alone. White.

Color stops time for one moment,

thank god we're not living in the dark,  
a glass full of roses is better than wine.

Where we are is the bravest house  
and of all things, beginning is best.

22 November 2008

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To sit outside because the rain  
is not,

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Sometimes a leaf  
runs away like a bird  
fallen on purpose  
and hurrying  
towards its new life  
away from any tree  
out from the old  
neighborhood  
into the free place  
where even we  
someday can live  
*I bring my color  
with me, I am here.*

22 November 2008

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Interminable evidence

no one needs leading—  
a soul?

a spill of light where I am only  
dark

hearing sunlight

make shadow on a page  
and follow

the darkness home.

23 November 2008

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But something could.  
It's what goes on in the head  
walking home from concerts  
that kind of ear won't stop  
hearing, a worm that turns  
turns again. Will never get home.  
Will the bus ever come.  
The street goes there  
sure as sugar, straight lines  
get there. The piano  
still is jabbering but inside.  
Inside inside. All that skill  
kills. At least the music.

23 November 2008

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For some time now I have abstained  
from telling you what to do  
and you see what you've done while I've been silent  
it's enough to wake me up and shout at you  
you with your broken towers and your stupid wars  
that never win and always kill  
you blew it and I blew it by letting you do it  
I trusted I'd told you enough and more than enough  
but you went right on dying.

23 November 2008

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Something nearby  
nearly touching  
an acre:  
    one furlong by one chain  
a simple measure.

The oldest things only can be touched,  
earth friable, rock solid.  
The glacier left them,  
science understands the meagerest  
song, the doo-wop of parliaments  
leads men and women away from love.

Hardly know what it means,  
the secret is not loving anybody,  
drink only dew, chew  
dense bread like something  
the sun broke and let fall,  
then waiting. Something will come along.  
There is always something more.

23 November 2008

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But there was something there,  
a voice in the furnace  
that spoke through the pipes all through the house  
not a word exactly  
but you could hear it and understand

something is speaking  
is more important than what it says

the way lovers make do with breath on the nape of the neck  
breath in the hollow of the throat.

A noise in the night  
saying I am not alone.  
There is something to hear  
and the senses are the only guarantee the world gives.

Not that we trust them.  
Not that there is anything really to hear—  
just the hearing itself

sucking the vagrant airs in.

24 November 2008

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But if it didn't begin talking yet  
how could I listen.

                                  Answering is easy  
isn't it, always built into  
the question

                                  like a star in the sky.

You are the cloud,

*nuvoletta,*  
between me and there

I stopped listening, it was poetry  
again and we needed something more.

But there was no more.

24 November 2008

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But in this country we disjoint  
an idea before we swallow it.

Amazing how nourishing  
even logic can be when you take it

one syllable at a time.  
Whereas a philosopher is a man

staring at a sheet of cardboard  
saying over and over This is a mirror.

this is my fine mirror, I am beginning  
to see something even now.

24 November 2008

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Crimes against the mind  
always start in the mind.

What can we learn from this?  
And why? And who?

24.XI.08

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But it was close, the sky  
that day, as if in randomness  
a city were, and in its streets  
a gorgeous population roamed

and each one in that bright crowd  
understood me and wanted me.  
What else do you recall, I asked,  
but my patient had gone back to sleep.

25 November 2008