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BULIMIA

Wanting something is letting go.
How so? It told me so.
Who? The usual voice, the ordinary,
the Speaker of the House.
Which parliament? The house I am.

Wanting something is letting go.
Now my authorities stand revealed
I speak what I am said—
and what spoke me makes you listen.
O you hide in agency!

Could be. Wanting
something is letting go. What of?
Childhood say. Or a day
away from home and then.
Then what? No house to go home to.

Where did you go? Palisades,
saw a gull high over brown rocks
I stood up high above the river
as if the water ran also in the air
and high was my everywhere.

Did you let go? I am.
And from the gull a wind inferred
and woods it came from, trees
make the air we breathe,
did you know that? Do you?

I know that wanting is the worst
kind of letting go and all my life is
letting. Don't you know a man
never knows what his life is
till he lets go, and then can't even know

not even the little bit he knew
before all his wanting made it so?
No. Resistance is the painter's wrist,
the violinist's fingertips. Resistance
believes in place no places,

in being not in going. Why do you bother
to say so? I am letting go of letting go,
I am looking out the window to see
the place I am inside. You only have
a house to go out from when you let go.

1 November 2006

MOORISH ELEGY

being close to the edge or
black surprise Atlantic
the ocean grave

what are we to make of it
whoever we are
that there really was a slave trade

and it lasted so long
still does here and there?
And you stand there

in your wet clothes explaining
Neptune made me
or made me do it again.

No one made you, you don't
exist even yet, you are America
and I can't get you out of my mouth.

2 November 2006

America, you need the poets.

They are the only ones
who will never assimilate,
can't be absorbed,

every morning for them is Ellis Island,
eternal immigrants
into the space of the other.

Because the immigrant arrives
and after a long or little time
becomes part of what one drew him,

absorbs him. Talks the talk,
the tribe. But not the poet,
never can. Lost in language

always stumbling through some doorway
drunk with discovery and dread.
No poet knows how to talk.

2 November 2006

ONCE I KNEW TELESIO'S FIRST NAME

but these things fall away,
the theater burns down
the thousand thousand snapshots
float in the black smoke from the burning archive

and settle down as amber leaves in rain
read them on their way to fire

the images are lost but I still can see
there was an image there.
Picture of an absence

charring as I watch it, as the rain
dissolves. Such things,
the leaves, the names. The theater
of the mind burns down.

Trees grow quiet all through winter
creaking sometimes, or cracking in the cold
when an old branch falls.

3 November 2006

BEGIN EVERYTHING BEFORE BEGINNING

1.

fire engine not many leaves left
22 degrees the masonry of cold
teachers of the secret lodge me me
or as the Discourse says a me-meme
a unit of personal identity
construed as semi-permanent subject
agency semi-gloss elf-shine screwed
by long landing strip the fog the earth?
The earth was gone before I got here.

2.

Cosmed in the hood this tree of axle
I fed the horse with my fear sugar
above all is sticky always use the wrong
senses white is a color in the glass
or church of what happens to the air.

3.

Be there they lied to me but he he
gave me fried fish and was always true
and tough and high but they were mean
the difference. Peach tree in my dead yard
the sap still sticks my fingers together
nerve by nerve we are anatomized but saved
by him to whom I brought my me.

4.

On time's deep furrowed back I rode
into the crumbling citadel of now
from which these singing bowls are rolled
stifled with my forgiveness, letters,
letters, suicide of the mirror.
Name a color here, your favorite,
you've got to choose before you leave the room.

5.

In the play he was Portugal
his black sand got in her folds
people played along his fingers
licked salt off his eyes, his lips
carried on about the sea the sea
but there was nothing to be seen.

6.
Seeking to sustain their delusion
he became a wooden bridge
and a cheese forgotten in the cupboard
and a gallery of video installations
but the audience had sense from time
to time to turn away, embarrassment
is the deepest trench of art, the un-
mistakable unfakable response
which is an utter failure to respond
to anything but the sinking inside
and art picks that moment to hammer
your head, stifled applause,
everybody rushing to the doors.

4 November 2006

CORAZONES

songs sings these
hearts in southern parts
naughty be ashamed
touch vein spanking
your heart with guitars
drowning heart in wine
pressed from merest touch.

November 2006

= = = = =

I am tired of writing about the shadows of passing women
of friends' inappropriate behavior
of the funny sound my heart makes when I roll over and rest my ear
on the cooler side of the pillow,
tired of what I hear inside me then,
the hoofbeats of aerial bombardment, the smirks of elected officials,
the indifference of those who elected them,
because I hear screams, the same screams you hear
of people who live in burning houses, in the wrong city,
in the wrong religion, the wrong color skin

I'm tired of writing about what's inside me
when it's the same thing inside us all,
I want to write a political poem, politics
is polis is a city, the right city, I want to write
you a city you can live in and not get murdered,
a city from which no obscene rendition
can snatch you through the managed air
to old capitals of practiced repression
where the truth will be beaten out of you.

Politics doesn't exist anymore, politics
is argument among citizens, and all the citizens
have gone to sleep, they do not care, every
four years they throw a switch and call that caring,
and banks and churches feed on the agonies they make.

(Oct/Nov '06, Kingston)

GREEN

Summoning the rapturous accounts
the merry men swarming in the glen
like shadows in deep woods on a sunny day
— takes one to know one — until
the iron bastions of identity rust down

then there is nothing left but shouts—
shadow of a sound then, blue echoes,
my face in your glass. It all begins.
We lost the distances again, our only
definition, sly baroque embellishments of be.

2.

We think we belong to this but what is this?
A fisherman asleep by a sluggish stream
that's all, but still it runs ten miles
of water past him while he sleeps.

Think of sleep. Think that someone wakes,
a chair sits ready at the table. Coffee, tea,
western harmony. Theory of sugar.
Hunger draws the night deeper into itself

until the dream shows up, sopping wet
with something, I know that smell,
“our skin is gasoline!” he cries
and wakes into dawn. The chair is gone.

Consider the legs of a waking man
shuffling up the hallway. This old fart
is still Narcissus, the pool was empty,
see, and everywhere he goes he hears her cry.

5 November 2006

LOVE SONNET

Hunger dries. Thirst imagines.
The Hungarian army masses at the frontier:
that is the name of a flower. Or a color,
a crayon labeled in the box. A color
halfway between. Cars go there too
and come back with peculiar reddish dust
all over the windshield. When children
have fathers the father has one too.
Ivory, or like it. Asleep, or shamming.
Far to the north the constellations seem
to be broken on the mere horizon.
Christmas is coming soon it says in kanji
in the café windows. Eyes of people
fixed on other people. That old conspiracy.

5 November 2006

FIRST QUIRINAL SONNET

Was the city ready to be itself yet or
were there foxes still playing round the door
trying to make the whole house into something more
an animal or waterfowl stumbled up the shore
needing something bright and heavy in its core
to tell the touch knows the crime in every pore
because martyrs chant while Romans roar
sunrises helps everyone forget what comes before
no murders only politics all men are good for
women hide their laughter in the parquet floor
fur gleaming from those caresses we adore
when I put on the mottled tunic that she tore
look I dare to wear what you once wore
don't talk about love as if it were a chore.

6 November 2006



Call Santa back
and change the order
just coal this year
bad as I can be.

6 XI 06

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amusements of November
sound of a gun sound of a groan
a clumsy falling out of the sky
crashing through golden amber branches
one turkey dies.

6 XI 06

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I did it wrong
I wore the horse and rode the boots
and there I was in nowhere
with hard roads and empty sky
and wondered why. And wondered why.

6 November 2006

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If you had a road
would you let it get away?
I did, I'm stuck here
to this day, and I pray
to the moon to come back
and show the way.

So you
with a road of your own,
tie it up at night
before you sleep,
tie it to your ankle
and sleep light.

Keep
some sort of vigil:
the devourer of distances
is coming over the hill.

6 November 2006

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Why are there so many me's?
No awnings more and still such sun,
an awning is an eldritch thing,
a Brooklyn measure, numbered streets
west of Nostrand and I never understood.

Bluebeard's boudoir, Prince Valiant's chapel,
I caught a woman in my bucket from the well—

I would be a pagan leader, still believe in trees,
no, believe at last in them,
not yet the tree religion
stands clear, Druidry is avant-garde:
that is the great mystery of Britain,
no quondam, all futurus,
Druidism is yet to come: when tall
slim saplings rise into the pure light
out of the cloven rock.

And all the rock-religions sleep—
Maitreya wakes! He rises from the chair!
O chair that civil thing, that tree-work
off the ground,
and from the wood he rises,
while Zen meditators try to turn to stone,
motionless eternities,
but Maitreya
is My Tree, he lifts
out of the squatting rock
at last a human presence in the air.

6 November 2006
Kingston

CASIDA

If you can't smell me
let me raise my voice

a man's name belongs to other people
the first woman and the maple tree

I'm shouting I'm trying hard
listen to the fabricated oaths

objects swear to make us happy
art history lessons given in the clouds

the Aristotelian energies of stone
in a world of lying things only myth tells

the truth is otherwise than it seems
every story talks in the same ear

every word really means I touch you
but it is not my hand or not your skin

that's the whole story wars come and go
we try hopelessly to figure out the causes

just try most days to remember some of it
before the lying fingers let you go.

7 November 2006

EVENINGS AT EIGHT

Ornery expectations of ex-drinkers
dinnerish but still standing
surely beyond blue bridges
a deviant population disports
itself in the wave, examines
the contour-giving properties
of cloth. Cloth. Be silk
for a change, *tais-toi*. Millions
hurry to exchange their lives
for yours – what it means
to show your picture on the screen,
wizard of dozing off, a parliament
of fools. I know it doesn't mean that
but now it does. Even Christ
remembered to unlock the door.

7 November 2006