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[Interlude, among the Runes]

Runes are all arrows.
No runes are wheels.

Even the fylfots that try to whirl
are angles – arrows
trying to shoot each other,

arrows trying to turn back and strike the archer.

How else will he ever know
what an arrow means?

“For the final goal of the science of hunting is to come upon this rare and wild beast who transforms the hunter into the object of his hunt.”

[Bruno, on Actæon, in *Furori. Culionis*, 76]

And later we read: “he opens his heart to widely to knowledge [the object of the hunt] that he is assimilated to it, absorbed by it, integrated with it.”

How will he turn into what he seeks?
No wheel can turn.
Only an arrow can,

ricochet off the hard sky,
come back and pierce me.
Be sent back by the magic beast
the stag whose glance alone repels the dart.

Stag party, men begging time for mercy.

+

Human mortals only invented two things ever:
arrows and wheels.

Everything else was given.
Everything they make is one of these.

Fylfot – you call it swastika – is the picture of an arrow trying to be a wheel. This is unnatural, bent, transgressive. It has been used to mark the ultimate human transgression (the badge of genocide). It has been used to mark the ultimate striving for unity, transgression of the system of samsara, turning diversity to unity, the badge as in India or Tibet called su-asti-ka, the may it be good sign, the auspicious.

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2 January 2005

=====

Circles still waiting for cabs.
Letters in the long place
mind up getting read.
Then where we are?

Littera scripta manet
it said be careful
Latin for That dog will bite
if you leave it lying around

anyone can read it, lawyers
fugitives from Phrygia in
funny hats can tell your future
while serving you mint tea

pouring it slowly, teapot held
a yard above the tabletop and
the clear greenish stream
steams in a neat arc in your glass

for tea is served in goldrimmed glasses
as words are spread on paper
for anyone to eat, beware
the Turk who eats his food backwards

beware alphabets you could easily
write down I violet ink you bought
on the corner of the Rue de l'Ecole
(of medicine they mean) where eyes

of premeds have at times
a blue or greeny luster,
opaque irises of Tabriz!
sulky pulpy lips of Isfahan!

go back to your feeding,
a book is in the shade
your face in sun, unhealthy
as a crucifix on fire

dangling from your rosary.
For you, you heathen, you pray too,
it's not just the fundamentalists
who threaten weather

by magic, who pray to a cruel god
of typhoons and plate tectonics,
you pray too in your own way
to girly gods and rainy citizens

and angels that bring you breakfast
—on a raven's wing proper
a crumble of unleavened bread—
because prayer is verbal

and you like that, it's like a book
you can read with your eyes closed,
sideways, mouth wide open
and passing people look at you

like a one-man klezmer in the Place des Vosges.

2 January 2005

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Suppose: the number of gods
in any planetary system
is equal to the number of words.
Finite, but very large.
Finite by their nature
– red is not blue –
but infinite in their extension,
can live in the same sentence
“red is not blue” forever.
When you prove one thing
you prove them all.
Because all means all there is.
And if anything is, then
everything is. The logical flaw
here keeps the world intact,
red eternally trying to be blue.

2 January 2005

=====

The only difference between landscape and women
is that a woman talks.

They are the only things I really love.

And try to make love with them in different ways.

2 January 2005

C

Keen. To cut
down trees.
Blade bite.
Courage,
be keen.

Take your heart in your hand
and cut the world with it.

Carve. Cut through. Keen.

What are the ways a blade knows.
Say these ways.
Body and soul.
What is soul?
Soul is what moves

my body to you.
Soul sees the far
pastures brown
for winter,

soul walks.

k

What comes back when it goes?
Nothing. There is nothing
on the other side

only the one who traveled there
from this.
Soul. It brings its boundary with it.

Soul, soul is frontier.

Now walk the boundary –

it is a woman

reading in bed

who just before she turns the light out
but the big book still open on her chest
murmurs “Poor Charlus!”

When she turned out the light
I stared across the limitless frontier.

k

Some call it sword
but sword hisses,
sabers slash–
only a k-nife cuts,
kniv the Danes say,

a K and an N, a knife carves death in.

Keen the wit is,
the wit to know sorrow

only by knowing sorrow
will you know what’s on
the other side of the woods,

every footsteps hurts you.
Furthers you.
Follow the blade.
Follow the pain,
the pain knows.

The blade that cuts oak

lets out a cry
the cry leads you
deep into the tree.

People like you and me are made of wood.

k

Which way does the blade cut,
which way does the arrow go?

I picked up a fallen arrow—
no idea who shot in,
who it pierced, who shook it loose
from the wound it made,

whose blood dried on it
and how it came to lie just there
where I was walking,
trying to find the limits of you.

I picked up the fallen arrow
and tried to write in the dirt
to find out what it says,

every stick has a word inside it,
every point aims a meaning,
I picked up a fallen arrow
and tried to understand,
the meaning is there
beyond the place I mean to go

*meaning was keener
as my mind littleth.*

2 January 2005

=====

But if it were only the night
and the bright calligraphy up there
forgot all about us (if ever
it even does remember)
and just kept writing,
no need to be clear, just right,
stars for its own sake,
system signs to light its own way.

Count them. Arrange
the points of interesting light
to say what you mean,
what you want her to read
when you tell her Look up
love and understand
all I mean and don't know how to say.

2 January 2005

=====

The red peppers on the Christmas tree
(there are no chilis, we have no tree)
make like lights so passing devils

say they love too, they'll stop a while
and bless us with hell's benefactions:
lust, insecurity, instructive pain.

For everything that happens is an angel.

3 January 2005

=====
Anxiety to understand the kingdom
makes a king of every man.

=====
Carve a doorway in your wall
and call the outside in.

=====
(A history of the world:)

Silver
shone on scabbards
somebody said.

=====
[Old texts on a scrap of cardboard from sometime in '04, might as well put
them here.]

3 January 2005

=====

Waiting on the day. We begin
a day with waiting. The say
of waiting is a stolid song –
Schubert, Mendelssohn –

the kind of song that looks around
the house or lawn until it spies
something it dearly loves, names it,
hums about it for five minutes
then goes to sleep again
where we mostly live
between the pinprick and the pain.

Snug inside the body's grammar
the song thing makes its way,
by fish pond or linden tree or Chinese vase,

whatever the music was trying to record
builds its quiet shadow deep inside
where it's not much in evidence day by day
but duelists often see it as they die.

3 January 2005

ONE OF ORPHEUS'S LESS SUCCESSFUL SPELLS

Rappel
down to hell.
Ski up again.
It's only hard.

The sun below
will show
the only way.
Melt

back to life,
beloved, nature
is a wheel,
no waiting

so you
close your eyes
tight and
dream me too.

3 January 2005

HARVEY BY MOONLIGHT

Dissolve the current
and reclaim the sea.
Nobody move.

The population
is one more dream.

To be in the hands
of money's hard,

wingless angels
dawn without horizon,

maybe the blood
does move through our veins
some man discovers

what can it mean
it must be like puberty

suddenly to shout out
what everybody always knew?

Nothing moves.
The blood dreams.

3 January 2005

=====

Some come closer to the valve—
these let the system
heal itself with new ideas.
I have spent my life
reaching that faucet.
The simple plumbing of the mind
after all. The unity.

3 January 2005

=====

Being beyond what knows –

so better the pyramids
sleepy intestines
than all this Club Med

I live snug as a brick in a wall
inside a vivid idea,
a version of history
that has me in it, tiny,
important, an ant
of consequence on rostrum or scaffold,

a name like an anvil
to beat our future on.

I know this.
But it's only knowledge.
Gratifyingly unfalsifiable,

like a good idea. I laugh
all the way to the bank.

3 January 2005

=====
So there is this flower
called Midnight Glory.

No man has even seen it
but some women have

one I remember, walking north
on Hudson Street, smiling

as she passed but not at me
especially, just at all

she had ever seen and done
all she was carrying home

of all that experience.
Midnight was long gone

but the flower lasted,
I could see it in her eyes.

3 January 2005

KALI

Kali lets me watch baseball on tv
Kali lets the evening sun
turn the clouds red over the Yamuna
and lets me watch that too,
lets me walk the tall fields
in this grey country, lets me
walk right up to the sky and knock on the door –

you people are too hung up on skies,
She tells me, there are doors everywhere.

3 January 2005

=====
Green stone
an Inuit maybe
took it in hand
and made it seem
a little animal,

we live by weight
and density and hope,
move things around
to love them better.

But all they need
is shape and color,
sometimes the touch
of such hands as ours
to smooth the seeming.

3 January 2005

ACT II ARIA FROM MYERBEER'S *DINORAH*

High note
silences us
into applause.

The heroine wanders in the hills,
we read the papers in the café
rustling the big pages impatiently
to make her come home. Bells,
church: as if it's the Angelus
they're always talking about,

whatever that is. It has a white sound,
summer snow, a little goat
with a big bleat, shadow of evening.

A woman clears her throat
just past my ear.
I don't know which foot to move first,
I fear to fall. Deck of cards.
The cards fall too, we read them
even before they hit the wine-wet table.
People used to go to church in his town.

Now it's only the Jack of Hearts
sitting on the fire escape in his undershirt,
midwinter, not even hoping.

3 January 2005
End of NB 272

MOUNTAIN SPRING

My father said this
is a *spring* the water
is always pure always cold
it comes from the rock
itself, the mountain.
I knelt beside the road
and gulped a lot of it
from my cupped hands.
It was colder than anything
I had ever tasted, it followed
that it was purer too,
my father hated any lie.
Running water purifies
itself in a hundred feet
my father explained.
Now I knew everything
I had to know about water.
There was a war on,
I felt this information
sank deep down inside me
and would save my life
some day far away
in a dry country, this
pure cold water
trickling out to me
among trefoil and lichen.

3 January 2005

