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## BASQUE IN SUNLIGHT

just play, their work  
is play,  
whatever you have to do  
make light of it,

make a song and dance of it,  
a game, and spend  
the light playing the game

then take the night  
for your own  
and play  
the quiet dark games of the night

Just play.  
When we speak at all  
we're speaking Basque.  
Play Basque. A word  
means to play.

Our word means wyrd,  
means weird means destiny –  
we have to go to Latin to say what we mean

their words break rock  
by laughter, insert the *zakil*  
in the *alu* and a race is born

whose words come before them  
the dark words still half-rock half-sound –

Speak them  
the way you hurl a ball  
with all the power

in your body  
against what is not  
your body, the wall,  
the rock wall

as you speak out  
your hard mysterious words  
that even you don't know,  
hurl them against the silence  
that means to kill us all

speak them  
as if the sound of them  
burns its way out of your mouth

words like cries  
and you are the last to know what it means

this word you cry.  
Only the word is at fault,  
the hard beautiful polished stone of the spoken word,

we all are where and who we are  
forever. Only the words move,  
the words get up in the night in the rock,  
bounce off the rock wall and dance.

29 January 2005

*ALU*

Basque for vulva, Hindi for potato.

Apple of the earth:  
Eve's fruit  
lifted,  
    taken in.

This is the ultimate yin.

The yoni-food that contains  
strange yet to be discovered  
alkaloids of tenderness and care.

Rice nourishes  
but alu makes you kind,

because it is a dark fruit  
because it comes from the bottom of the earth  
from a place where there can be no falling anymore.

29 January 2005

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I explain too much.

I should just let it sit there in the sun,  
the sun will take care of it,  
will make everything clear.

You need me only to lean on  
or sometimes to rest in my shadow  
to get out of the sun.

It's there every day  
but we never understand it.  
Let me try to explain.

29 January 2005

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Every night you dig up the seed  
and look at it, brush it free of dirt,  
breathe on it, spit on it tenderly  
and plant it again.

There is  
another way of doing these things.  
Another thing to do with love.

29 January 2005

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Release me, wooden stick,  
release something in me

if only to speak.  
Speaking means: hiding in the word.

And when the word is gone  
there I am

shivering on the mountaintop of what I meant.  
Rescue me.

Bring me to the island of meaning less.

29 January 2005

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*Tumescant attack.*

Say it. Later  
figure out what it means  
and who meant it  
when it chose to  
say itself in my head

who did it?  
Three times it said.  
So that I finally  
write it down.

Permanent everyday obvious mystery:  
who speaks?

As time passes, animals get what we call older –  
a strange disease of how we seem.

I look at a photo of Guy Davenport  
printed with his obituary –  
clearly the same face I knew forty years ago  
when I took my first jet flight ever,  
to Kentucky, when we were friends.

But something happened to the time  
so past tense seems truer than present,

or we are friends in the aorist,  
the unbounded tense, unfettered by time  
actually passing.

We never lost affection,  
we lost the time of us.



and our faces changed.

What is this *something else*  
that does not seem to wish us well?

But who can tell,  
maybe our faces are getting ready  
to be emperors in Otherland

my profile getting ready for its gold coin,  
sweet money of the only place that lasts.

29 January 2005

*So the words 'meant' only to make me  
run away from their evident meaning  
to what was really on my mind?*

*LONGITUDE,*

what does the longitude give us?

Ford gave us latitude,  
the cities of the forties, the civilized,  
and the mystic thirties, ancient Cairo, Lhasa, Benares.

Latitude gives us shared seasons.  
weather often, always light,

the light of 42°N  
on Annandale, on Florence falls.

But the longitude, the quiddity of that,  
is what?

Look at the map and pretend.

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The sky is not different from I see with

or into its open awayness  
my own awayness opens

same into same so a seen  
white is white everywhere inside

and things think their way away together  
in the dance called *fading* –

it seems a one way arrow  
but who knows  
where such thought sound seen  
things fade *to?*

30 January 2005

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mausoleum as  
under the snow a lawn  
and underneath it constructed  
vast brick and concrete room

and nothing in it!  
Space all my own  
and just for me  
secluded,  
nothing but walls and floor and ceiling  
and me to walk about at ease

a private space not even on  
the face of the earth

hidden, habit, found.

30 January 2005

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This fade-out thing that flowers do  
leaving no messages behind  
or just a few, hard to interpret,  
scribbled too fast  
                                    and then the cloth  
of petal is still there  
but not the color,

the torn cloth is a different color,  
paler, and the fabric  
changed. This amaryllis  
on the windowsill  
has bloomed twice  
since Thanksgiving, first four huge red  
chalices, then after they withered,  
five more, even bigger,  
more scarlet than before.

And now those too are looking paler  
two days before Candlemas.

Seasons, celebrations. I find in nature  
no history, no memory.  
Archive is what we don't remember,  
clay tablets, yellowed paper, the hides  
of calves tortured into parchment narrative.  
all gone in dark where my flowers go.

Nothing leaves. Everything comes towards.  
I grieve for all the emptiness filled up.

31 January 2005

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What does it mean  
that birds live under my house?

I see them flying out from the foundation.  
Is there a sky don't there we don't know about?

31 January 2005

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it is the bottom of it now  
cellar of the thought  
the cold wind finds everything  
the admirals shiver on their phosphorescent bridges

a blue Buddha image very small  
has made its way down the veins of my right arm  
Do something about me  
I am wrong

wrap sheets of gold around my bone  
and tell me this is living  
this is a woman's face  
calm in the next door light

busy with her being far  
since all we do is distance  
and nothing moves  
that freight train stood still in Calicoon

tracks down the middle of the only street  
I stood on the ladder and smiled  
at the camera how many years  
the sky lasts

31 January 2005