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Always fewer than from some  
an artisan culling  
bricks from broken  
–bad’s a function business  
no inherent –  
then the phone rings  
needs one answer  
some, argument from irritation  
one makes this noise  
another hears and then  
we call this cosmology again

it was all about making you  
understand what it felt like  
to be me – what a tragic spoon  
to share such a whatever soup –  
a boil of predicates salted with doubt

and no one knows, no-one  
who is one’s elder sister  
does take care of the night.

13 July 2005

= = = = =

They were always talking about light  
as if the fact of seeing anything at all  
still surprised them. Where had they begun  
to be before? Some closet  
of the heart before a house to hold it.  
All I really believe is wicca,  
a woman asleep in bed on Sunday morning.

13 July 2005

= = = = =

So many butterflies invade the deck  
the sea has turned into wings

and who can name them, thick and black  
they come against me as if

– but as if what? They caught  
a whiff of hawk or horror in the rainy air

and who is there to save them or save me?

14 July 2005

## ON THE HILL OF TARA

Let me have the sleep that comes with this  
a rock in a field and a butterfly

*All stones are destiny  
every pebble the Lia Fáil*

We slept beside the stone  
now we'll never know  
whose dream we were  
whose waking we inhabit now

day by day the stone's  
imagination lives us through  
time's desperate hologram  
dying to be believed.

14 July 2005

## **DELUGE**

All the obvious animals flock  
out of the actual Noah's rock

then the lost monstrosities alone  
saunter two by two into our bone

till in the copious bottomless skull  
dragon and unicorn consent to dwell

and there they are when I look for them  
and when they find me I belong to them.

14 July 2005

## ANGELOLOGY

And by the night mill sky  
those angels only  
whose names are spoken  
out loud, boldly even  
but never written down.

Because the seabird never finds land  
and her mate is various  
across the distances and they cry,

you wonder finally what an angel is  
or how that pot of African violets  
–midnight purple– came to hand in Wal-mart  
you didn't buy but the color of them  
you did bring home –  
is that an angel who gives such things?  
An angel brings to mind. A kind  
of transpirer of all the patent evidence  
you try to hide she shows.  
Or brings to hand. An angel is a current  
or a wave. Not an ocean.  
Not yet an idea. The breath  
instead where an idea will be.  
Your angel is your breath.

14 July 2005

## **KEEP**

Letting the man keep  
his illusions castle  
in chinks of time  
stone enough to climb  
toehold on the sky

Bitter, bitter, the sea  
she said was wormwood  
and drenched her mind,  
you live in fantasy he said  
I wish I could she said

sometimes a woman needs  
a visa to her own mind  
it's not so easy to remember  
what it wants in you  
and who you are and you want too

who does the wanting?  
bathtub full of butterflies  
a simple tongue  
talking to you from a bush  
it licks you as you pass

the terrible moment comes

when X is more important to Y  
than Y to X  
and of such algebra our movie's made  
Sherwood Forest naked Marian  
Robin Hood is gay  
the sheriff looks the other way  
and all your principles  
come avalanching down  
like a collapsing bookcase  
full of Greek and Latin  
Brooklyn summer sunset  
hum of talk on Eastern Parkway  
in a city like this  
night always has the final word

but do you listen  
you with your crown of marguerites  
a single frail withering morning glory – Gate of  
Heaven – held light blue in your lips why?

Spatter verjuice  
beneath the cross  
the fluid mixture  
every hospital rehearses  
oleum moriendi  
a dozen times a day that certainty,  
Calvary, car crash, code.

The intercom buzzes, switches on –  
code they call it when a man is dying  
and that's the code she set out to break  
solve that neverending crime  
and the clues mostly stick to your skin  
morning even before you remember

–after she spent a night with him  
she realized she hadn't,  
he wasn't there, a voice on the phone  
only, a from line on the e-mail and good night

but it was iron filings that she spoke  
they stuck to the sun  
and rusted in her eyelashes  
the way we do  
a kind of Slovak dance  
or broken stove  
and there is no wood  
a white tile with a blue horse  
a broken horse

the old man taught her how to burn the stone  
and milk amber from peach trees  
and bring all her pronouns to bed with her  
to solve them while she slept

and wrap her mind soft round about  
like a summer dress all sheen and slippery  
bought at the Salvation Army [www.salarmy.org](http://www.salarmy.org)  
and sleep your death away.  Wake up.

Some new.  The fathers  
moan beneath the bed,  
roll over, fluff on your pillow

do you know who you are the doctor said  
No I never did  
your question bores me  
the world is full of people asking and  
nobody ever tells me who they think *they* are,  
these experts lingering in doorways  
all these old men talking on TV.  
Ask me instead:  who brought you  
through this narrow strait  
so full of rusty cars and seagulls?  
Who would you be if you could?

Then I'd answer you, first thing  
that comes into my mind  
because we can't be anything but what that tells us,  
the weird well we wake  
from, our lips just wet enough to speak.

15 July 2005

= = = = =

Birthday coming  
every gate  
is a permission  
a zone  
of new entitlements  
opens. Pleasure,  
pleasure, maidens  
handing flowers  
over, a well  
you never guessed was there.

15 July 2005

= = = = =

Know how much to be close to  
the wind rising seldom in these  
trees you sneer at me because a year  
or thirty separates us and time  
packs its witless jewelry in my bones  
crystals of breath slim shimmer  
of summer night ill-constrained desires  
and white hair. But laugh uneasy  
because this disease will eat you too  
teasing you between its paws year after year.

16 July 2005

*(a take on the new-found Sappho poem)*

## GUEST MURMUR

Looking for last things

Frescobaldi trumpets

Berlioz tympani –

if water could not feel

or fire touch

that kind of mute catastrophe

torn fingernail beyond

the edges of the world

so all we know is our own

hearts fill up with sudden

preacherliness?

Never

doubt your pleasure.

Imagine a bird doubting the sky.

If you can't enjoy the end of the world

friend, don't let it end. If angels

don't wear bikinis, forget angels.

Or make up another kind of them.

This planet brought us here

so tell us why, Earth, explain yourself,

I'm tired of carting yurts around and waiting,

following the goat shit path black marbles



## THE PLURAL OF AXIS

Getting ready to get ready  
a song before music

crystals are the dream state of matter

water is the only isn't,  
we wake and drown  
leaving night's crystal behind

this morning I am worried about crystals  
that everything becomes them  
time crystallized everything  
and the self sense first of all

I am the first crystal

analyze me with your goniometers  
your tender Viennese, set numbers  
to my variance from what I could  
until my tears turn crystal too  
wept for all I couldn't do.

16 July 2005

= = = = =

Is there one measure  
left to discover

a man studying his lover  
a blind man staring at the moon.

16 July 2005

## CUNEIFORM

It's a long time since I wrote another alphabet  
so effortless what I thought  
I thought into ours,  
I deceive us both,  
I need something hard to read  
make out the markings on the fuselage  
of a plane high overhead and fast,  
friend or foe, tell by signs?  
everybody is an enemy so far away.  
Go back to runes. Be a farmer  
counting rows of corn, counting  
kernels in the cob. *Quipu*.  
Everything talks. Wait for the IGA  
to open and trust God.  
Eat more chili peppers. Use a pocket watch  
so your wrist is free for someone  
else to take you by the hand.  
Until the last minute of our lives we are led.

17 July 2005

## IDENTITIES

In rain in car  
waiting in the car in rain  
waiting for rain in rain  
to let up

as if up were someone fine  
waiting to appear  
permission vacation furlough  
let and let be

let me be you  
and we wait in rain  
in car alone or two  
me waiting  
to be we

enough of me  
the reign of me  
must let up soon  
and your me too

give over  
bending down  
like those mauve  
petunias on the patio  
my god the love

of woman.

17 July 2005