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## **RED RESOURCES**

I have forgiven them all  
now to forget them  
the squirrel tails  
that give those rats  
such momentary elegance

forgive beauty  
for being visible  
and forget her face

that is the answer  
till the feeling falters

or is it only till  
the squirrels have  
finished all the seed and gone?

5 January 2004

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I meant a politics of you  
unwinding the machinery  
the bluegreen feeling that just happens  
when a thing is finished  
even if it's not finished well  
or something's put away  
into its place and the mind is clear  
for a minute or two, losing  
your colonies after losing a war  
no more Togo no more Kamerun  
where are my legs  
to stand, why is the earth  
denied to those it bore?  
A Latin question, the kind  
old poems ask and colleges  
yawn over for a thousand years,  
don't get me wrong I'm asking  
for you to be beside me  
to live in touch as some men live in hope,  
a cathedral is never finished  
always a ruin, the great abbey  
open to the instruction of the wind,  
a roofless love, the woman I forgot  
some called her turquoise

because her eyes were ocean  
in that sallow place, *cubicula*  
*locanda* saw Apollinaire  
rooms for rent in Latin  
for the students, nobody knows  
how Flemish I really am  
but those who have felt  
my damp mustache sur la nuque  
and breathed in my fantasizing breath,  
Christ stumbling into Brussels  
in Ensor's painting, and I am all  
the other faces, mask under mask  
until the simplest skin touches  
you and goes to heaven, how easy  
such a politics could be in we had a little  
bungalow right near the beach  
and money is only good in drugstores  
on toothpaste and Vaseline and soap  
and we eat whatever the fishermen catch  
and they catch whatever we throw away,  
this is the art history museum please  
you follow the footsteps of the visitors  
and see what they see, what they look at  
longest must be the best, write it down  
as your dissertation, who are you  
to go against the current of the world?  
I was a salmon once and look at me now

with a twisted jaw and full of lust  
and the only way for me to move is up,  
if you love me there is plenty to eat  
shadows and warm tabernacles  
and even among the avalanches  
the rhythm of all things is our salvation,  
we ride our world between our legs,  
people fear me often when we meet  
because some text is crumbling  
from my mouth, reservoir and baptistery  
and gentle old stone basin in a cloister  
all the ruses of water, *o mirror*  
*of your stillness*, hazardous face –  
when the wind blows I see  
what I will look like when I'm old  
but I could be your beast until the end,  
I saw my death year cut in plain marble  
simple serif letters and numbers  
like a tombstone in Switzerland, so many  
graves I have had already, so many  
certainties resurrected me in some  
outlandish name that always feels  
like hands, running my finger  
on the glazed wood after the ice storm  
when the dark morning was full of keen,  
edges and lucidities and the power failed  
and everything that stretched out

was sheathed in ice, describe me,  
describe me, I want to come alive  
as your imagination, I don't want  
to do all the work, you too  
become my symbolist, give birth to me.

5 January 2004

## TWELFTH NIGHT

The dream people need me  
and I need them. They come  
and move outside the tent of sleep  
I see their shapes moving  
on the pale fabric wall, shades  
cast by the dawn light  
and I know they come for me again

I wake to inscribe their necessities  
which are our histories, without them  
I would not have a word in my mouth,  
they bring a star this morning, and they bring  
an old French province, a Belgian beer,  
a person wanders naked in the woods  
she uses her body to show the way, show  
me the way, she shows and is the way,

words if interrupted turn back into body,  
she says Wake up, the phones are dead  
the amaryllis blossoms in the dining room  
so learn a new language every day  
the more you know the more the clothing  
falls away, it is a little Gnostic gospel,  
it is a man frying fish for you beside the lake

blue as childhood and birds are there  
no less blue, I know because it's here  
when I wake up, who else could bring  
these things outside my window, could bring  
the window for me to look through,  
identify for me carefully the name  
of the woman and tell me the language  
that's using both of us now, only seems  
like mother tongue, it is brassy dialect  
of somewhere else, some other god  
crept onto the altar last night,  
there is always another color hidden  
inside what we see, like a girl with  
an amber lozenge in her mouth  
you'll never know the taste of  
till you kiss her but she runs away.

2.

Support me by the fabric  
I mean the factory of dream  
by which we are clothed  
and dare to walk along the road

from this town to another  
without apology for our feebleness  
nakedness, only two legs,  
only two hands, how will I ever

get there, a mile is a million,  
and then I know that I can move  
only because the dream people  
are already inside my skin

all night they were weaving me  
and now they go out walking  
in me, walk me through the town  
because no one ever remembers

and that is the little glory of us  
we have to invent calculus every day  
and learn a new language  
that calls itself Greek again

but this Plato is not like I remember  
and his Socrates is nailed to a barn door  
and his Alcibiades is a girl in the wood  
running naked as a fox or a forgetting,

I hurry along the road, proud even  
happy, searching from crow call  
to crow call, crows shout me the way,  
crows are different from other birds

crows are left over from dream  
they bring me to the heart of the forest  
and lay me down to sleep, here  
it is as soft as a city, here it begins

all over again, never stop dreaming  
we will tell you a story, not every  
story, not all the ever words,  
just enough to slow you down

as if when I woke I remembered  
a word is a kiss that comes from  
inside to fill my own mouth first,  
terrible meaning of telling.

6 January 2004

## IDENTITY

Who am I, asked the man with the martini,  
I don't know, I've never known  
what your kind of people really are,  
it always seems to be snowing in front  
of overbright Christmas shopping windows  
downtown and I have money in my pocket  
why are you asking, and why me?  
I don't actually drink. It's all relative,  
Gilgamesh, Madame Curie, names get around  
and life is suddenly over, wouldn't you say?  
I wouldn't say anything. Your secret's safe with me.  
Why are the vitrines so bright, why is everything  
so deadly desirable? I feel like I want to get bought too,  
please. In red silk, with gold thread, with music.

6 January 2004

## PUGNA COL SOLE

The sunlight has its say  
or way with me, I yield  
more than the ice does  
after the ice storm

                  this

is not Italy, the sun does not win  
but does win me,

                  who

“lit the lamp” above the seeming?

the long natural uncoiling thought  
that makes us children

                  always

of what happens

                  Tiny openings

in a flute control

the sound the whole hall hears

wooden flute bound with silver bands,

what do the hands do

while the breath tries to talk

all our life

                  persuading instruments

to speak

–who knows us?

who cries out from among them,  
those knowers,

lecturers in dream  
from that strange  
academy

just half a mile or so inland  
from the beaches where a dark sea breaks.

7 January 2004

## TERTIUM

To talk to the one  
wounds, to the other  
mystifies. A telephone  
call always has  
three participants.

The one you can't hear  
hears you.

It is the moon,  
the moon hears everything.

A white eraser  
in the night wipes  
all words away  
from you and me  
but stores them there  
in itself, greed  
of the moon,  
never sated

we have to keep talking  
fighting on the phone  
scream at each other,  
the moon's big silence  
makes our voices big,  
we talk so hard

to imitate the silence  
of the moon

the moon overhears,  
nothing safe  
from the white ear,  
it listens in so hard  
it takes away  
all feeling and all meaning  
from what we say

and the moon will never let us be still.

7 January 2004

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Then came the amaryllis  
another color to talk to,  
a ship, two ships to sail at once.

8 January 2004

## **NOT JUST THE LIKENESS**

Not just the likeness of an hour  
but the sky itself, splayed out  
like Judgment Day across the earth,  
infinity that builds its local  
agency in pain, this dentist's chair  
vista, trapped before the huge window  
we live in fear and scurry when we can  
except when wine gives its teachings  
and a drunk man's head is higher  
than the moon up there in scary  
endlessness, as if a thought is ripening  
however incoherent the crazier  
the better, something loose and lewd  
and out of all reason, pain turned  
inside out that might be something  
like the truth before he sobers up and falls.

8 January 2004

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Larger, play the green larger  
a girl who murders the horizon  
is rarer than sympathy

an actual fracture of the circle  
to let the new word in  
stretched along her flank immensely.

8 January 2004

## ENDGAME

Judge the signs the old  
equivocations, chessmen  
upright in the squareless snow

each one knowing how to move  
and where to go, red ivory and white  
ivory, they fight against each other

they do not need our hands  
to make their moves  
or our brains to contend, no,

signs struggle against signs  
and that is the long sad  
history of the world.

8 January 2004

**PELLIS. PELIGROSA.**

The skin is the organ of between  
perennial negotiation of the distance –

battleground where in and out contend.  
To touch another person is an act of war

or warning, an invasion of the very  
landscape that is in such long dispute,

the Kashmir of the world, no one's land,  
valley of delight, your own skin.

8 January 2004

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To know everything  
into yourself  
through that gate

Winter music  
what happened  
to my skin?

14 January 2004