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The squall of light
ill-curtained by windless
soft embeds the morning in
something other than itself
no name proposes—

certainly you were listening,
certainly the devious hours
so plentiful with waking
maps a journey for you
across the lawn, the smug trees
all set to go, this church
of air dissolving worklessly
all partisan pieties

and only you
girl friend of the particular
bend down and pat the earth
your quiet little dog.

Wet fingers.

All that night left behind it
caught in the momentum of your skin.

AGGRAVATE THE OBVIOUS

so it leaves behind it chorales
of unexpected, resonating
in random tumblers on the table

and the window chatters with reflections
you never heard before. Strange
to be so alone, a pioneer
of the dining room, this space
becoming anybody's guess

and even the tulips in their Tuscan vase
are more like ruddy faces watching you
than proper Turks though they do keep speaking
a language that sounds like poetry
among the vowels and otherwise like cars
braking on gravel. But who wants poetry?
This is now, no Ottomans, no odes.

Something has changed and everything
knows it, not just you.
The whole house is paranoid with light.

4 April 2004

=====

Eager to demur
a bird song
inside the house,
who, who is saying
so many things

no end of hearing?
I have listened
to this book
all the days
of my life and
sometimes written
down what it said

everything we declare's
a footnote to it,
a glad scholion
we shout to sing.

O Torah in the least
of things unceasing
voice arriving new.

4 April 2004

=====

I'm not sure I can tell a voice from a book.

When you remember something
it's all you, all inside you, all wet as ever
with language. And everybody knows
language comes from nowhere.

What I hear when no one is speaking
is constant information
also. It keeps speaking
and speaking and writing things down
using this or other instruments
testing how much it yearns to tell us.

4 April 2004

=====

Can't you hear?

The habit
of have it

the cave
of coming home?

Cowbird, little
Carmelite,
nun at my feeder,

Saint Theresa
smiling
in the heart of every
seed

listless
the glad morning.

4 April 2004

=====

for Keith Waldrop's Jacob Delafon

All the evidence points to now
but by the time I study it
the culprit's gone.

04.04.04

=====
Swans die the whole music –
Vera Karalli in Evgeni Bauer's 1916 film
spent the whole swan music on her toes
sur les pointes
the tension of the human
body upright holding
mapped onto the ballerina
who holds herself uprighter
she is by exaggeration
the parody and truth
of our own striving
against some dim remembrance
of animal condition,
the earth rebuked, old gravity unsaid.

4 April 2004

friend day they say

daring to know

time's nature

narrowly spoken

some hours of daylight

some of night

I read my Vedas

in the everywhere.

4 April 2004

=====

They see with all parts of their bodies,
they sometimes sing.
Hearing them, composers have transcribed
much curious seemingly human music
(Debussy's *En bateau*, Brahms's fourth ballade)
that really is from them.
Some of us sometimes pray to them.
Often they are pink or pale.
When they are with you
you don't feel strange.
That's how you know.

4 April 2004

=====
I am whom humble
in the face of when
but all the other queries
plait their tails in vain
because I do not know

sheypa means know
in Tibetan, don't know
in French, who answers
when no one asks

that is the one
I claim I am
listening website
vague music or

frontier of the other
act of cognition
not to know is
also knowing

Rue de Fleurus in rain
the park behind you
paradeisos in grasp
duck into the bookshop

on the corner, cities
have streets, streets
make corners,
here is Rabelais

tell how to live,
here is your mother
how silent resilience
how mind this matter.

5 April 2004

(Parenthetical, #9)

It wasn't suicide
it was punctuation,
wasn't blood
that stanching a thirst
for nakedness

wasn't crucifixes
that stabbed the wall
so that the sun bled down
and woke this child

I have stared at the wall
where I began
and felt the dream again
that slept me then

fragrant with because
even in those blue days
crushed clouds, *bare*
intelligence

ranged like slates on the roof
in rain,

what were you asking
when I began to answer,
I am shaken to know
how much I want to tell you

5 April 2004

PHILOMETRY

In certain amplitudes
in this cluster
or plexus of what feels
(**hrd*, the heart)
is a bird not too small
fluttering to wake up or
about the size of a prairie hawk
in a five gallon jug
to get out, the
heart is always trying to escape,

to get to you, *i fideli* said,
the faithful ones of love's religion,
Durante's elder brothers,
if love could
the heart could
and the bone prison could yield its Casanovas

never, always a wakeful jailer
in the works, a sweet sunrise
(now) on a cold morning
to say "Be still.
Beauty rescues us from love."

And when I complained the room had no desk
the concierge explained I'm sorry,
you have to ax for one
and the girl at the desk
in uniform repeated, next time just ax,
and the glory of their gilded stucco
was a diamond on an old man's hand

that quality we share with poetry
of being gorgeously sad,
Durante's teacher Virgils
with his sobbing Libra voice
licking the sleek buttocks of the beautiful
always on the brink of leaving,
ces beaux départs
that make the hawk
hide its head under wind and
yet there will always be flying,
who does it,
always be adoration and a door,
the heart at morning.

6 April 2004

LATE LUNCH

Would the other, less distinguished, thing
let them do something ordinary just for once,
to roll down Warren, “a long queer
street” towards the common river
searching for lunch but who listened?
It was the dog’s fault they were refused,
some places just have policies. At last
they found one with tulips in the window,
a workman’s chophouse in the afternoon,
romantic between lunchtime and tea,
that served him lamb and two small
omelettes for her, scraps for the poor
nasty little dog. Sometimes hard
to distinguish well-done fat of ornamental
bacon from the edges of the chop itself,
the way histories mingle in the mouth
of the moment when someone tries
to tell more than he understands.

6 April 2004

[They are Edith Wharton and Henry James, having lunch in Hudson.]

=====

I always worry going down steep hills.
It's easy for the horse but how about the carriage?
Doesn't it press forward irresistibly
against the horse, the passive suddenly active,
the whole equipage lunge down towards the river?
Last night I dreamed of an electric fire
but somehow found a green garden hose that put it out.
That's not supposed to happen. And the river
is not full of smashed landaus and dead horses.

6 April 2004

Herrenvolk

The Mister Race is also means,
tribe of gentlemen and their chattels –
womenfolk, first victims of every imperium.

6 April 2004

GOING BACK HOME

after Jenny Hendrix

When in the season of cathedrals
I hear my heart do something funny
like a train over the bridge

[B train, Manhattan Bridge]

I begin to understand the dark, rough,
unpolished stone that lives down there in me,
allow me to be vague, somewhere

at the bottom of all life I know I'm scared.
Ashlar. Cornerstone. Unmasoned altar
as built beyond Jordan. The cathedral

stands next to the Masonic Temple,
both of them inscribe their stuff in me,
line after line and then the corner,

[Lafayette & Vanderbilt]

corner after corner till I get to
Grand Army Plaza, green of trees, black
panthers crouching in old bronze

black except where on their haunches
a million children's hands hand
rubbed a bright curve clean –

this is the corona of the sun.

6 April 2004