

8-2004

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## SIX REED

Six deer.  
Yesterday  
we saw three.  
But that was the day Five  
and they were, two of them,  
small. Smaller  
than any fawns we'd seen  
browsing alone our roadside.

Today is reed, that is, deer  
going away. Today is *aj*, 'reed,'  
which is *ja*, 'house.'  
A day runs both ways.  
A house tries to stand still.

A good day to stay home  
and bind reeds. To make  
quiet things at home  
if home is what house means.

But a house is the place  
a young man leaves  
to find his home.  
He is like a late-born fawn  
in the woods, awkward,  
tenderfoot, terrified  
leaving shit behind him  
when he's scared and runs away.

He stands among the reeds  
thinking the low hush and clatter  
he hears are music.  
Wind in the reeds.  
Why should he think such a thing?

He knows no better,  
what does a deer know,  
a young man on his way?

Only a house  
has information.  
Only a reed can tell.

7 September 2004

## WHAT HAS BEEN SOUGHT

Be near. Or fear.  
Or hid. Beneath  
the color  
the orchid lies,

form lurks  
like a serpent.  
Formal, the  
beautiful things  
behind their corsages.

Smoke. Very  
every lover wants  
somewhere else.  
“Who  
wore the roses  
on the cross?”  
the stranger  
asked, why  
is one thing ever  
married to another?  
Marry me,  
the boy said.  
Infant. Orchid. Wedding

meant wager. Cell phone,  
adipose tissue given form,  
conversation, talking  
trash at one a.m.  
too tired to stop talking.  
Telling. Color. Form.  
Orchid folded over

on its own fertility.  
Like music maybe.

2.  
Rinse. Drench.  
Dance in wet clothes.

Customs and corsages  
a dory to the dock  
from that bright thing out there.  
yacht. Orchid.  
Inland waterway.

Typhoon. Big wind.  
Big water. Big air.  
The flesh tolerates  
its imperfection,  
animals never suicide.

3.  
But we. Orchid.  
Purple mind

fades. Angel.  
And we.

Purple mind or crimson  
kermesse, the girls as before  
dancing, kerchiefs now, corsages.

Try to weep  
uphill,  
thing feelings  
back up into the heart.

An orchid grows inside everyone.  
The suicide tries to tear up this flower  
to get to the serpent hidden underneath.  
Final venom of the system. The form.

8 September 2004

## GRACE

1.

A bird, a remembrance.  
You. I never knew  
a girl called Bird.  
Or a bird called anything.

Everybody  
has a special name  
I have to know.

How. Stare in the fire  
listen to water.  
Read everything  
that comes along.

2.

Children study cereal boxes  
and milk cartons carefully.  
It is a terrible ironic place  
to print pictures of lost children.

All children are lost to begin with  
housed among strangers  
trapped in a weird biology.

3.

Input and output. Doors.  
Rooms. Walls. Ceilings, floors.  
No bird. Sometimes  
the closet calls. Escape

from the trap into a smaller trap.  
Homeopathic. Your closet  
can be big as a forest  
and all the animals are  
very quiet in it.

So quiet you can hear language  
itself speak,  
the word before the mouth.

8 September 2004

## **A PHONE**

That they go is distant. A thing. A phone among others is a voice among same. Who called? I heard your ring. I smell lilies, that curious sweet sour smell of. A phone.

Think of all the words listening to your silence. They pour or seem to pour into your ear. One at a time. Word. Ear. Word. Ear. For a century or more this has been said and is still saying. People have been holding it to their ears and.

She wanted a phone she could hold between her legs, she told me so, I wouldn't have guessed. And you don't have to spell very well on the telephone, just every now and then you must say S as in sambucus or M as in martyrdom. Just to be clear about the names of who you mean or want. Mostly the other person's ear does your spelling for you. It is a game for two listeners and no one wins.

9 September 2004

=====  
Can I have this to say  
or is it only that?  
A pronoun is something that glitters  
in the sky of language –

in the light of it  
you can see everything  
and how it all connects.

Put *I* in front of every verb  
and see what that word means  
and then add *me* after it  
and really know.

Can there be a hornbeam without you  
or a nautilus or a semaphore  
without me?

9 September 2004 (late)

## **NO WIND WHERE WE LIVE**

It is good to hear you  
do I hear you  
is it your voice  
the leaves impersonate

And this wind  
that never blows  
is blowing now, dawn  
and autumn coming

monsoon meaning every  
part of earth has  
its moments of forgiveness  
I stood before the shaman

suddenly was him.

10 September 2004

=====

For there are stars  
significators the tension  
lives in the voice

some nights you hear  
the whole sky  
try to clear its throat

a gasp of light in darkness  
maybe but the witches came  
and taught me to want

And what do I want?  
The thing they leave behind.

10 September 2004

=====  
Maybe there really is an answer  
and I just missed it  
sneezing at the ragweed and September  
like a Latin poem  
dividing my seeds into sorts and counting  
I am nowhere and I begin.

But could that silence self be the answer  
the silence in any number  
waiting for the word to tell not what thing  
it specifies  
out there in the crowded world  
but the distances alone,

antimony, guitar music, salt?

10 September 2004

=====

Being wounded and waiting.  
Having the ink  
that's made to speak  
instead come out  
and kiss your hands  
to quiet them  
with color,

making you the color  
of what it  
not you  
tried to mean, tried  
to 'express  
itself' as the books  
say, squeeze  
itself out

out there  
where the world is,  
where you run  
hurrying and waiting  
for a miracle.

### Miracles

wait for observers,  
there are small forms of life  
so adapted to the fall of light  
that they can tell  
when they are being seen.  
Freeze when you look at them.  
They feel the anti-photons  
that swim back from the eye

to the reflective surfaces  
(‘color’) from which the eye  
stole all that meaning.  
The colors of things.  
The compensations.

They hide  
only when you seek.

At the corner of the eye you see them,  
stick insects, dawn fox, blue midnight deer.

10 September 2004

=====  
A constellation is a thing  
our eyes wrote on the sky—

a cross, a swan, a warrior,  
a bear, a beast  
around the corner – these  
are mirages, brother (pronounced Buster),  
not stars.

*Buztan*, tail of an animal  
as of a fox or wolf,  
I try to call out to them  
in the woods, I need you,  
not to possess, just  
know you're there

*hire buztan*, your tail  
flashing in the underbrush,  
that bitter opaque shrubbery that men call time.

10 September 2004

=====  
In the old courtroom my wife  
summoned for jury duty  
was forced to remember out loud  
her dead sister, long ago slain  
by a drunk driver running a light.

Remembering is a river,  
too many times  
we write the same word down,  
leaf fall, a voice in the woods  
singing to itself, all alone,  
going nowhere, nobody  
listening but I hear.

10 September 2004

## INSTRUCTIONS

Dip the ink into the pen:  
miracle! The doctor makes  
the painting sing. The statue  
prances round the room  
giggling at all the guests.

Living? Or just moving?  
Professor Klots explained  
the only proof of life  
is Irritability,  
apparently his word for  
responding to stimuli.

But she smiles  
at everyone. She sings  
from the 2D surface of the picture,  
Xerox of a photo of an oil  
painting by someone dead.  
No oil anymore. Just voice.

The icon of the Holy Mother  
weeps. All mothers weep  
for their children's pain.  
She looks at us and cries.  
We look at her and are not sure –  
what do we feel?

Do we  
respond to stimuli? Do we care

about her tears the way  
her tears (by theory)  
care about us? And who is this we  
and how dare I speak for it,

I who do not dare to speak for myself?  
For us, darling, who have lost  
so much time and space  
but not this. We hear  
the picture sing. We watch  
the stone move. It smiles at us.  
Or do I get that part wrong  
again, and all the smiling's  
left to you and me?

10 September 2004 (late)

=====

My father never told me many stories. This one he did. When he was in high school, in German class, German used to be taught in New York schools the way Spanish is now, there was an unruly boy. The teacher picked the boy up by the neck and held him out the window four stories above the ground while he went on lecturing. The boy became ruly. My father admired this teacher very much. He never told a story about the boy or what the boy said or did after. Maybe the boy never said or did anything ever after, all his life he felt suspended eighty feet above the playground and terrified. I feel that way myself. Maybe I am the boy. Maybe that's why I can read German so well and can't speak it at all.

10 September 2004