

10-2004

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WRECK

Reckon: Why is a window  
like a widow.

Why is why  
not at the end of the alphabet?

Why does anything linger  
when I am gone?

1 October 2004 SM

=====

## **The government hurts my heart.**

At the bus stop  
in the mountains  
where so many workers wait  
standing in mud, in rain  
waiting for what never comes,  
no cigarettes, no symphonies  
each one looks up to the hill  
and hopes and only knows  
the government hurts my heart.

Can we do it together  
can we imagine a place  
and make it be there  
by going there together  
and being there together  
in the silence of the alphabet  
through the slim intestines of the rain  
reaching, the hill  
and maybe more than the hill  
where no government hurts my heart?

1 October 2004

=====  
caught up in it as a man  
with a woman on his mind  
gets caught up with pictures  
in his head and not much said

just some words that light up  
the silence of those images  
of him and her together  
everywhere and these few words

make cartoon noises round  
the soundstage of his head  
or is it heart, where do we  
stage those fantasies—

I read you that way too  
a stumbler in a wheat field  
crying out in mild pain but not  
getting anything across, disturbing

crows maybe, heavy breathing  
and the woman falls.

2 October 2004

## TOO SOON AND A CORMORANT

Lascia me her song began  
and that meant not whip me  
but leave me, and why does pain  
always feel like a departure

the smack of it the sight  
of a coast receding – everything  
that happens moves the boat

And we are elsewhere  
to each other, hurting,  
singing about it, dying alone  
too soon and a cormorant  
slips fast along the uneasy sea

the pain of love is to remember it.

2 October 2004

=====

waking anybody takes a lot of nerve  
whimsical princesses  
half-smothered in pillows  
wake with a half-smile  
and make me feel surreptitiously  
upright, like a tree  
pretending to be just a friend.

2 October 2004

=====  
Crow. Yo!  
With a mo-  
tel ball  
point pen  
I try  
pressing  
down hard  
to write the sky

with you (yo!)  
in it, Crow,

your fierce sound  
loves me  
like a hard kiss.

2 October 2004

## PRAYER

Everything fits  
if you guess it in  
enough. There is no  
such thing as no  
more room.  
Imagine in.  
Joseph with his foot  
in the door  
and Mary  
stumbling to the floor  
the sheep get smaller  
the way they know how  
and you kneel down  
inside the fallen leaf  
praying to them  
to her to him  
to rain to the leaf  
itself outside  
how can you  
ever even know  
where prayers go  
whatever you  
may have in mind,  
prayer finds them  
the way the sheep  
finds hay  
in the darkest corner  
a woman's shoulder  
wedged against its flank.

2 October 2004



<late> =====

A city takes its name  
from the first god they find  
singing like a drunken man  
under the ground when they dig up  
where the market place will be

and they listen to her song  
seeing the boundaries quiver  
in the morning breeze  
at the edge of sight –

drag the golden coulter here  
to mark the limits  
set up the boundary stones,

this is the *mundus* the ditch  
that makes a world  
of what's inside it

a city.  
One you make it you belong to it.

2 October 2004

## **DUOFOLD**

Long time this fountain pen  
given by FDR to his press  
agent Myles F.Lasker of King  
Features Syndicate before the war.  
His name is on the orange barrel  
he did not live to see the war.  
The pen goes on talking.  
I could tell how it comes  
to be in my hand,  
or make it tell you  
but it would take all night.  
Another life. Everybody touches  
everything. That's one part  
of it. Nothing gets lost  
completely. Everything remembers.

2 October 2004

=====  
But suppose I only dreamed it  
the blue writing on a pale blue ground  
like a letter mailed from Somerset  
eighty years ago, Agatha Christie,  
and I still couldn't tell  
a polite note on squirearchical letterhead  
from God's hand scribbling the sky,  
what good am I in your Eames chair,  
how can you listen to me?

For I was one  
who thought everything that happened in my head  
was worth the world, was worth your while,  
I hurried to tell you, I was one  
who thought I could walk right up  
to what I thought and touch it, there,  
where you live, on the modest avenue  
of value-bearing particulars,  
dogs, linden trees, churches, nasturtiums  
and all of that is just the same to me,  
  
having a right to your body as much as to my own.

3 October 2004

=====

I say less than I think  
and more, I say  
the words that saunter from my head  
—that can't be what you call thinking—  
and say them to you  
because they tell me to.

3 X 04

=====

Chittering squirrels in the woods  
and exasperated birds.  
A few minutes later a fox coughs,  
a helicopter comes by low and cruises me,  
passes and recurs.

What do they know,  
animals, machines?  
And in the middle I know nothing,  
hearing noises, feeling breezes,  
choking on guesses  
by which I live.

3 October 2004

=====  
How long things last  
depend on who I am.  
Otherwise it's Fifty-seventh street,  
Wolff's Deli, miracles  
below the floor –  
the Roman Empire is down there  
and all the blood that Mithras shed.  
And all the souls that Mithras saved  
shuffle around us  
bringing rye and pickles.  
All waiters are the recent dead  
come back to take care of us.  
When our souls are saved  
we get born in the next world in line.  
Adam was our first sinner  
to get the word, and the word  
makes a new world.  
We are made out of wax,  
beeswax and honey and feathers  
hold us together, we are placenta  
and reminiscence, devils and raisins,  
yeast –  
    all the tiny animals that come with us.  
It was of these  
that the Master of A Garden spoke  
giving Adam dominion–  
over yeasts and hollyhocks and such,  
only these. The rest  
belong to Great Time  
who owns you too.

3 October 2004

=====  
I am by most  
a needer  
nude

    then a falcon  
fallen then a night  
around you

when I begin to speak  
brash  
    as crows creak  
wake, wake,

I am something  
I want to tell you

only when you listen  
will I know what it is.

4 October 2004

=====

A land full of places  
interrogates an arrival  
who carries time's passport  
in his face but still needs  
space to sleep in.

An émigré  
challenged by  
border guards of distances alone.

Once on a clear day over the desert  
I saw the curvature of emptiness  
away towards a bent horizon  
where a little smoke smudged the sky  
over the Straits of Hormuz

and I saw that distance, like history,  
is meant only to keep us from ourselves.

4 October 2004



**<late>** =====

Agronomist of dream  
I kiss your spell

it keeps babbling  
out of my lips

a word kisses its way out

There are sparrows waiting  
to see what kind of town we'll have

crown of maple tree  
whores in the park

where the cleanest water in the county  
bubbles out of the patriotic fountain

we are healed by every word we speak.

4 October 2004

=====

In the dream I am writing you a letter. The letter is about seeing you coming up the stairs. You are wearing a costume by which I recognize you even before I see the face you decide to wear as your own. I am trying to describe this costume, a dress, white, flower-patterned, unlike anything I've ever seen you wear or think you might wear, nonetheless I know it's you. Once you gave me a list of all the clothes that are your own, and perhaps this was mentioned on that list. I've lost the list. In the dream I am trying to explain all this in a letter to you. The stairs I say, the dress, the face. The texture it seems to have. The recognition has a texture of its own, like seeing cloth and knowing how it feels but not touching it. I recognized you by something else, not your face and not your appearance at all, although I didn't recognize you till you appeared. At the head of the stairs. Some other way. In the letter I am trying to explain how I didn't see you till I saw you, but that seems obvious and dumb to say. There was some other way I knew you were you. This is the letter.

5 October 2004

=====

They never know how little you remember. They may hope or guess but they cannot know. It is very hard to know – even you can't really know what you fail to remember. Then suddenly the unremembered thing remembers itself in you again like a man coming around the corner or the sun coming over a hill. River. Something about a river.

5 October 2004

=====

(after Elliot Dutcher)

**She was bareheaded  
as if she was staying in a house.**

Houses are so small  
but tend to love us,  
at least behave affectionately,  
the ceiling stroke her head  
gently tousle her hair  
write poems on her hair  
that sift down in soft white dust.

So she runs into the fields,  
*ins Freie*, the free, the open –  
no girls like poems falling on their heads,  
no girls like love so silent

so bareheaded she endures the cold  
interrogations of the stars,  
Colonel Orion sneering at her  
and fingering his bright policeman's belt,  
and all the little constellations  
gibbering their endless questions,

o God, she thinks,  
where is the moon, my friend?  
I love the moon  
the poor old hump up there  
twenty-two days old,  
where is the moon?  
I want the moon to love me,  
I want the moon to shine in my hair.

5 October 2004

=====

**Small celebrations who**  
embedded in a sort of haze  
each petal of the word  
moving differently in the time breeze

morpheme petals  
I dare the word to mean me  
coffee percolating through the maker

a makar is a poet  
a blessed one, a skeptic  
the nervous giggle of the intellectual  
against the trendy ones,

the now-brows. A word  
catches in my poem,  
I have to clear my throat,

saying, re-saying,  
ruby glass catching the sun  
ruby glass votive candle holder  
no candle in it  
but the morning sun.

6 October 2004

=====

**Imagine the other side of poetry,**  
what you'd see if you look back at us  
through *that* glass, us standing here  
like nervous lovers in a cheap hotel  
in the grand capital city we've read about  
all our lives and here it is outside  
all round us and the column with the admiral  
on it casts its shadow on this very room,  
we are a part of history after all, touch me,  
I am real, we make each other somehow  
into something accurate if small,  
the long shadow of the admiral lays  
itself down across our very bed  
where one of us smokes and one of us  
waits but for what, what, since  
everything is here already, everything done?

6 October 2004