

11-2004

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**THANKSGIVING DAY 2004**

The permanent America  
over my hill  
where the crow's calling from  
and comes now to 'my' tree

How fast the clouds move  
from the southwest but it's still  
down here, crow  
you tell me so much

as much as I need  
but only a little bit I understand.  
What we do  
becomes America, the rest

is that pure myth of stone  
water, wind. And wind  
is just another kind of rock  
on which we stand,

a stone that breathes for us.

25 November 2004

## **HEROIC**

I feel like Aeneas in Book VIII  
this morning  
walking in my backyard  
the trees  
clouds moving fast  
the sky my only river  
some bird calls me from heaven.

25 November 2004

=====  
The old lawn roller  
has been rusting in the underbrush  
for forty years,  
it was here when we moved in,

it is a part of the ecology  
god alone knows what role  
its crystal hollows its resonance  
its chemicals play

in this little world out there  
I see clear only in winter  
before the snow comes over it.  
From which a mosquito

comes now to bother me  
me the center of the world  
with its analects buzzing  
too quick to understand

but I think it is answering  
the question, things  
are their places, no difference,  
go inside before I bite.

25 November 2004

=====

*for ER*

Catch hold of it  
no not of salt  
a sea she waded in  
small,

the baptist among  
a scurry of doves  
not all overhead

some scooted at her feet  
awkward white  
a message fallen  
among simple men

she was not  
she prayed  
to be part of what fell.

25 November 2004  
Boston

=====  
Catercorner to a waiting  
a room felt swoon.  
No sense. Desire  
wails drunk beneath  
the skin. Everything  
calm. We wait  
for what we need.

House. Impossible  
resident. Stormface  
wild liver, everything  
calm. We need  
a mountaineer  
around here,

a mountain to climb  
to get above the radio  
the static is built in  
to the signal  
the heart heaves,  
*ekelhaft*, Niagara  
of sentimental gush.  
Zambezi. Schaff-  
hausen. Iguazú.

Noises the same  
the whole world over.  
We need for what we feel.

26 November 2004  
Boston

=====  
Sit on the curb beside me and console.  
The sun is out and the museum closed.  
Isn't this what we mean by  
having come beyond culture,  
beyond the system of the world?

I was a king once and you were too  
which is how we can bear to read such stuff  
as old romances, flags and lances,  
dented chalices and I think of the first woman  
who had this thought: They caught His blood  
in a cup then guessed which cup it was  
and told her lover go find it for her

and he went and the world began.  
Isn't this the gilded paintings of Siena,  
isn't this Babbage's machine, Novalis' hydrangea,  
Proust's treacherous cobblestone?  
Everything is looking, have I found it yet?  
And what was her name when she was young?

26 November 2004  
Boston

**SAD**

because she married outside the Company of Love  
a small neat convenient husband  
who cluelessly enmothered her till the kids  
–male as she could make them– ripened  
eating out her heart and the lake was cold  
and all the letters her true love the Owl  
sent her she sent back unopened and wept.

26 November 2004  
Boston

## CAUSE AND CONVENTION

Privilege ripe. Be then a wary.  
Be through a new way.  
Be now or after most be after.

No business sense waiting for the sun.  
Pack the stories up day after the feast  
pack up the stones. People run

is what they do, people run  
to do what people do, how else  
could they be somebody ever else,

the terrible burden to be me  
and nothing carry, have to marry  
some other me and then listen,

listen eighty years to grow wise  
and then. Live in the boneyard  
read by corpselight

measure your yawn against the  
crocodile's, breathe smoke,  
forget everything and wake.

The hard aspect needs you,  
breathe in everything that disgusts you,  
love what you hate, even me,

the sheen of virgin light along  
the undersequent surface of  
your thighs, yes you.

26 November 2004, Boston

## THE SILVER BOWL

rustic bar on the edge of Queens  
shuffleboard and my reward  
a little bottle of green soda chaser size  
or one of those spicy Polish sausages  
dead in a gallon jar like disjointed thumbs  
don't think of that don't think of penises.  
Be energetic and act nobly, you carry  
every tantric habit home, America,  
night yoga, séance, rap my table.  
Then leave a pair of hands in wax,  
hollow, like gloves from your own hands.

26 November 2004  
Boston

## LIKE YOU

I am tired of everything  
except sleep.  
And then I wake.

26 XI 04, Boston

=====

Silk brocade white dragon  
on blue ground  
stretched out over Bellevue Hill.  
All the rest is me.

26 XI 04, Boston

=====

Desire is the sort of conversation  
people are too stupid to forget.

26 XI 04

## THE TEMPLE OF MERLIN

I need the word now  
the cunning architrave  
on Merlin's religion  
built to no god but his own shadow

shown as a colorful mosaic  
of Ninien (Ninuvien, Vivien)  
on the wall of the apse  
her arms spread out along the easy  
curve of the walls to welcome us

Vivien with blue eyes and dark hair  
but where her lips would be  
a little golden word  
has been inlaid among the tiles  
a word no man can read

but I can read it,  
it says **τρα**, beach or strand,  
and means whatever she tells us  
everything we do or say or know  
is just sand alongside a vast ocean  
that brings us on its waves  
all the little things we have  
then sucks them back some dat,

we are littorals, marginals,  
and the best of us are soaked with that sea.

\*

But who is Vivien  
(Ninuvien, Ninien)?

One said: She was his mother  
come back to claim him.

Name him. Come back to learn  
what he had learned

in all those years away from her skin,  
his beard down to his belly, his beard

down to the floor, she came to discover  
what all that hair was trying to cover

the human form she had given him  
along with her own god devil's eyes –

but she came to enquire  
what he had garnered and made up and imagined,

and when he spoke his lessons to her  
she sent him underground to ripen

for a time, ripen under tree and under stream,  
everything we see and guess

is surface only, someone's face,  
and he is under all, she set him there

to ponder, to bide his ripening,  
in all the quiet dim espousals of the earth.

Our time is different, passes quick, his slow,  
we hear him sometimes, rarely,

a voice down there  
that must be his,

but he's not crying, it's a singing  
mainly, like a little child

in clear voice repeating the nine-times table  
or all alphabets from Aran to Nangchen

just so he would happen to forget.

\*

But another  
said: Not mother.

She was a woman  
he had never been

she took the form  
of that pretty little acolyte

who used to keep him company,  
Vivien or Ninien or some such,

but the woman came in from  
a little bit to the left of the dark,

she moved inside the pretty little girl  
who sat on Merlin's knee

and fondled and got fondled  
and so passed into that western region

he called sleep.  
And while she slept this other came,

No Name her name was, or Noman,  
Nowoman, and she examined Merlin

quizzing him all through the night  
till he had worn out all his spells

–a spell means what a man knows for sure,  
a word when spoken the world has to answer,

a spell means a knowledge of what is,  
and what is never needs an explanation –

she asked for more.  
Grow in the earth, Lord Onion,

grow in the ground,  
bring up small blue flowers for your crown,

stay there until you chew all the roots  
and piss the rivers full

and these same rivers will reflect  
the textual madness of the winter stars

where our homes are  
and all things are finally explained.

Read the stars in your body,  
the deep scars of light

and sleep until that reading's done.

26 November 2004, Boston

## PHONE

march of the voice  
a cell in amber  
sudden open to the air

φωνη

or answer

so many sounds so few mantras

although more than we suppose

when it is spoken it is heard  
and silence turns away

hear me,  
there are aspects when you hear me  
when you are just beautiful  
Berber rug, fondling the  
underside of the weave

I touched the tree, made it weave too  
in evening light, a slim girl tipsy at the party

the forest, ash, elsewhere.  
Widow tree.

And how have we deserved our joys also,  
everything earned, miseries and splendors,  
built out of life parts, quarks,  
these strings say me –

who can resist a pilgrim?

*Evade Answer Remember*

*Forget Keep Silent Be there*  
for me

wait on the shelf  
life of an article,  
the the among friends,

object and interlude,  
a thing by itself  
is only an oracle.

*Lizard on a leash*  
*your far red dragon,*  
all I believe in are the old images  
rising in a new mind

your heart on fire in the ruined chapel

—do I write for stones?  
isn't anywhere that I can walk  
with ease a decent path

even though we meet two pilgrims  
coming down the steep mossy path  
from where the lepers hide,

even though it goes over the mountain  
into the next valley  
where another language is spoken  
a dialect mostly of water  
but my mouth is dry there

and I can only come towards a woman  
by pretending to be a man  
and not just me,

a baffled transplant  
from a bluer planet even  
where we are given each other  
fully just by being born

and bodies belong to bodies  
words to words, spirit to spirit  
as even your holy books say: *Bring  
fire to the fire.*

But in your world they made the distances.

Bodies apart grow weird, uneasy,  
soon diseased. The crèche  
of sexual enmeshment  
would make us all immune, my Spartans,  
o healing fluidity, then language  
–used all these years to say  
Please touch me or I want to–  
would move on to a higher saying  
and Technicolor silences  
exploding over the orgasmic ordinary

and a word –that now only  
labels or remembers–  
would suddenly give birth.

A sound would make.  
And in the phalanstery of the heart  
what dictionaries ripen!  
And in the skin, the pluriverse of molecules  
waiting to answer!  
Your voice their singular array.  
Your breath arrives them all everything new.

27 XI 2004, Boston

## MANGO

As of a pen the tip dries up  
or mango wrinkled but the flesh is sweet

untrust the surfaces—  
we begin to forget allegiances

snowboard and so on, Melville still asleep  
in the New Bedford rooming house

breakfast sausage trim hair and beard  
clatter cobblestones trust the fog

be a nice street where no one waits  
lonely as a lap speak Irish next

the way the dolphins do  
waiting for the delivering hand.

27 November 2004  
Boston

=====

The cynic is never far away –  
why I hate dogs.  
I suppose if I made up a catalogue  
of my dislikes I'd find a cameo portrait  
of me, cut from my rock,  
my inner substance showing whitely through.

27 November 2004

=====

On the wheel  
a brown leaf  
wet from yesterday's  
rain still enough  
wet to stick  
to rubber and it rolls.

We are the Kingdom of Mixed Blessings  
where wet and dry  
fight it out from Anaximenes

the man who took care of the moon.

We wind up being in charge of what we think.

27 November 2004