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## **BLACK DOG**

Couldn't there be change?  
The black poodle behind the stove  
has other things on its ci-devant mind  
besides rescuing me from girllessness,

it is a dog of the beginning  
if dog at all, even as the martini  
in my veined claw began  
life as sacrificial juniper

that Sherpas burn to the Goddess  
on their way up the highest mountain  
according to the National Geographic,  
speaking of girls. No change.

For things arrogate unto themselves  
four things: impermanence, color,  
deceptiveness and truth.  
Their fugacity breaks your fucking heart.

And I suppose that being gone is  
also a sort of change so maybe one day  
the pole star will look down on happy men.  
I mean happy me, I always make that mistake.

Who could the dog really be? And who  
lives on the top of Everest, so crowded  
with Japanese and cameramen? Is he cold?

Has he traveled through unscheduled nights

to warm himself behind my oven, sheer  
smelly animal of him, reminding me  
that I too know how to sweat, swink, swive  
and other archaic enterprises. This devil

is certainly details. Look at his bloodshot eyes,  
why should a dog look like that, he doesn't  
drink, he doesn't sit up all night reading  
ancient chronicles in monastic scrawl,

look, the sun is rising all over town,  
no place to hide, kids talk sensibly outside  
on their way to the gibberish of school,  
Good Friday is the secret name of every day.

OK, dog, arise and sing. You come here  
for reasons pregnant with beginnings.  
Who? All I ask is an answerless question,  
the kind I started with. What

was my face before I was born? Did it  
wear glasses, mustache, did it cringe  
when church bells rang? Did it think  
every twilight shadow was a dog or a girl?

29 April 2003

## AFTER FRANCESCO COLONNA

Wouldn't you like to be  
like the guiding woman  
in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*  
and lead every lover

up the civilized mountain  
lifting your long hair  
to show that special  
nakedness leads them on?

Where could we go  
but to the Natural?  
And what could we do when we get there  
except what is natural to us?

Do you know yet  
that you and I are  
and are of one nature?  
Different sex, different age, interest,

attitudes, rhythm, all different.  
But there is a dark star  
that inhabits us, its raying arms  
reach into you and me

as if we were the same animal.  
Lead me to myself, you  
will find yourself there too.  
In the quiet morning

we prepare the day,  
the lunch to carry, the map  
you are. I slap you lovingly,  
you slap me back, we embrace

again for good measure,  
the star makes us crazy inside,  
we risk everything,  
we go, we die to live.

[24 April 2003]

{from *The Night Book*}

**INORNIS** birdless  
a viscous morning  
suddenly inorn  
soon even this will  
begin to speak.  
Maybe at the end  
of life you tell  
a story again.

29 April 2003

## **TOO MANY MARRY**

Alkahest needing

to dissolve the excessive vessel,

to be trim. Size

of oneself not

a dram larger.

Filming through the empty glass

fills the image with new meaning,

a different kind of light,

smudged, meaning? Meaning is witness

30 April 2003

**FIND ANOTHER NAME** for me

find it in the forest  
where there are no telephones  
and I bring my own fences

but you have to find it for me,  
name me, I said, because  
we are all children of Lilith,  
Eve came later, name us all

because they bore false witness  
about us and our mother,  
said we were children of  
whereas we were not, no families,

we were born orphans  
in an empty world.  
We are the ones who had  
no mothers, I need you,

do you understand,  
I am telling you something  
you never heard before  
though you've heard all the words,

the tea in my cup has grown  
cold but no less bitter,  
it is the morning after all, turn  
the bible inside out and begin.

30 April 2003