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ARCANE

Measurements confer a certain peace
versts of woodland and an almond of eggs
my legs are weary from a nightless sleep
the kind that says Rise up! Rise up!
every third image will be thy face
then morning slaps along the building's flank
its hand of gold, could I really be
who you think I am, Saint Dream,
Saint Semaphore?

Because I woke without a face
in a house with no mirrors, no sun
sifts through the leaves in this deep woods,
the little path runs up through Magadha
two thousand years to walk those dozen yards,

Jerusalem is nothing but our skin.

You are one of the very few who knew,
and knew that in your body. Only
where body is fulfilled can soul exist —

a monkish body full of lust is spirit rich,
we are Jerusalem,

our touches
cantilevering together build the temple,
our cautions and anxieties are the beasts
we sacrifice, priests in the vast noontime
where desire's music blueprints heaven here,
the smoke of our offerings going up
building identity in the empty sky.

1 July 2003

GAZEBO

In the southeast corner
or Florida of my domain
but on a hillock leveled
by Bobcat, in deep shade
eight-sided, screened in,
airy: a house, and me in it
writing, waiting for you.

I am on the edge of what I own
or what is own, and where else
could language leave me or begin
except at the furthest edge of what I am,

land of rapture,
the laugh in the woods
where the dark is also waiting,
green-hearted blackness
also waiting, the orchestra
tuning up forever, never
the motif announced,
translation without original,
variation without theme,

and for all the heat of afternoon
the painters sweating on their ladders,
satellites cruise in the southwest
screaming messages at us,
the frenzy called communication,

but here I would be quiet into language
listening for you.

2 July 2003

TWO

two people in a dark room
sitting across from each other
in a lightless room

if one of them

had in hand for one
second a powerful light
what would they see
what would they show?

2 July 2003

FOR YOU

for you
listening
a barrier a bar
a man sings
your name
whatever he
may be thinking

star map
she holds
overhead arrow
points north
to orientate
your self beneath
space space
find east

blue anger
I must be
asleep too a nap
an urn
napery mildewed
around the buried
nape

stone wine
headland
stone wind

you must be tired
of me now
the cool face the stare
at someone else
always
forgive me to find
my way
an idiom.

2 July 2003

CATHEDRALS

1.

Where you sit down. Where you by sitting down insist. Where you sit. And by sitting still you speak. You look around.

A cathedral means a place for a chair. The chair. There is a place for everything in this world and this is the place for the chair. The chair is the place for you. You are sitting in the chair. When you sit down, you speak.

The bishop's chair is called his throne, bishop means overseer. He is an episcopo, a man who looks around. When you sit down you look around. This looking gives you authority to see, this sitting gives you authority to speak. Speak what you see. Look around outside inside. What gives you authority is sitting on a chair. Only you can do it. Only you can bend in the middle.

The middle is where the real is kept. The middle of you. You bend in the middle to sit down, you sit down and sit still and look around. Only you can do this. Only you have the authority. Anyone can be you in the cathedral. A cathedral is where someone sits down and becomes you. You sit down and what you say by sitting takes on the form of law. Even judges must sit down to speak their verdict. Verdict is truth telling, isn't it. Only you can tell the truth. You tell the truth by bending in the middle and sitting down. Bending the in the middle squeezes the middle where the truth abounds, the truth is compelled to speak. You tell the truth by sitting down.

Whatever you say in a cathedral becomes the truth.

2.

The best cathedrals have no roofs. They lost their roofs long ago. They took them off, the way an old man takes off his hat to mop his brow on a hot day. To feel the air. Without their roofs, cathedrals can have open discussions with the sky.

You go inside and sit down and look up. Sitting down and looking up is what is called thinking. Sitting there a while is talking. Talking begins in that sitting quietly, especially in an old church with no roof on it. Just the sky. But a very special sky: a sky shaped by this building that people built. What were they thinking? What did they know or understand, that they were able to shape the whole sky?

Whatever it was, it lasts so long that even when the roof is gone you can hear it. And you can begin to speak.

3.

Your body talks. Only a human body can sit down. When you tell a dog to sit, Sit, you are telling him to be a human. He can try. But the front of him is always on the ground, his paws rest on stone even in the cathedral. Even in a cathedral no dog can sit the way you or I can sit. Not even a fox can. And most other people in the world can't sit at all. Think of a fish for example, a fish sitting down. That is why you can talk and later read and later write, reading comes first, because you were able once long ago to sit down and look around. Bend your body in the middle, you're not a candle or the moon, not stiff, not round, though you are bright, you bend in the middle and begin to think, and this thinking of yours begins to speak.

Your thinking takes the form of pointed windows full of light and air. They shape what comes to you. They shape the air arriving and the thought of all the ones you love, the ones who are out there in the world beyond the walls, the ones who love you, the ones for whom walls are only shadows across the bright simple road of longing. The ones who come to you in mind, right now, always, they are part of what your mind has built. They are a part of your language.

Glassless, the best old windows do not interfere at all with that they let pass. Shape the information, a window holds light in its hands, prayer hands, but the light is bigger than any prayer. The light is the same size as you. Allow the untranslated light.

Wise Chinese distrust those who speak standing up. Their classic sermons always begin: *the Master sat down*. This sitting down was the way to tell us. He was speaking. If a man is sitting there and talking, why then he's talking to us. He's not standing on a wall shouting at heaven, like some anxious Greek, he's not bellowing down the nave of a church like some unctuous parson. He's sitting there talking. You sit there in the ruined church, you are aware of the sky above you, the shape of human thinking all round you: walls, arches, groynes, squinches, windows, columns, all the ways you think.

Hasty logicians surmise that any place you sit down is a cathedral. There is something true about that, you and only you. You and only you.

3 July 2003

Robins run on new sown ground
I notice how little they have to say
I dreamed a dictionary came in the mail
And I learned to write clearly again
Careful and unhurried like a little child.

3 July 2003

SUICIDE

If I could

I would be Scardanelli

But not yet

So much Bordeaux yet to do

Columbus and a sailor.

3 July 2003

BEING SURE

about the last one out of the boat
the law of putting candles out
never by blowing them out
never use your breath to limit light

but the boat is empty
and the snuffed candle waved out by your hand
smokes its acrid paraffin
over the lake a little

then that too is gone.
Spent candle quiet lake
who knows who lives.

2.

And inside, where morning
is being welded and enameled blue
where no one lives
whose name you'd dare repeat in public

being so unsure of what you know
or just unsure in general
the way the night gets to be
whose gradations are invisible to us

—how can we know
one time of darkness from another—
until it doubts
and lets the light in

insidious wanderer
always wavering at the edges
of peace you think
thick with your night thought

and then the sentence
suddenly ends
and you know once again
you were just babbling in the dark.

3.

Or is it time
the wine you
tried to buy
but who'd sell it?

4.

Having an idea
about where to stow the hose
he moved the house

the hard things
are always easiest
to find, a hose

is impossible
things tie themselves
in knots

hoping to control
all the others,
be squires

and ask the neighbors in
to rule them
as far as food

and comfort can,
the bossy push
of public am.

5.

It takes a little while
to say everything

count on it, wheels
within wheels they say

going everywhere at once
voices in the neighbor's yard

dog there crow here
we choose our gods

6.

But only the biggest god
has the smallest voice

you hear at the edge
of your not listening

a word flickering small
in the corner of the mind.

4 July 2003

QUIET ROAD

Taking the quiet road
the fluent one
under rock
till the ground
falls past it
it rises
and flows to join
always to join

water rises

as you would do
becoming able
spreading flour on the earth
in patterns

offerings *vévés*
I sift the shapes of things
I borrow
from the sky

2.

Imagine obvious
a falcon
anchor winged
today over bridge

it too must nest
where the lightning lives
where brick walls
hang down from the moon

some saplings *palos*
to be a roof for you
and hold the stars off
your angry sisters.

5 July 2003

ATTACK OF THE PRONOUNS

I would touch you if I could
but that's all I ever does
willing and iffing and youing
moon anchor cracked sky

there has to be
somebody here but me
or is it nobody
like a pineapple

danger love so rough sweet
the skin is only evidence
read it to weep
time's dismal luster or

a fish caught in the surf
gulls wait
or leaves
and leave them scraps

to scale and fillet
the dues you owe
for being separate
for having images

held before you in mind
for carving a personal sky
and living underneath it
for being you so thoroughly

out of reach
a woman or something
standing on a beach
doing something to the light.

5 July 2003

