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Picking the day to do something
is an aluminum day
a common thing they made shiny
people like what shines
(but it's the fall of light
makes colors true)

so be aluminum darling
poisonous everyday
sleek as a new bus
comparisons anonymous
everything out of control
at least you're happy

but are you you?
are you telephone
a contained full of sand
dawn noon dawn moon
all of that ridiculous
sequencing that's all
they let us see
of the machinery
are you radical?

It was hardly worth asking
we both know the animal answer anyway

back in the days when angel meant
an uncontrollable beauty
would we have been able to name it?
even then there'd be no we,
we was only an afternoon in Venice
actually early autumn fresh wind
around the little cape where the rowers start
a sea wind then a motorboat
around to the Arsenale to see the old brick

and maybe one more time on a hill in Provence
making a mistake about the path
and the wind came up fierce into our arms
and we are open to the emptiness of fragrance,

no, that's guilt, that's afterglow, that's lavender,
that's sin, we did it, that's staggering, that's wind
that's fall down, that's try to know
anybody outside yourself, that's failure
that's damaged merchandise a little car
that's a house where somebody lived you forget who

who knows the hour? Nitrogen
and oxygen screaming for release.
Carbon using us. Hydrogen hurries home.
The gods of my fingers walk into your house.

14 June 2002

<Argosy: Morning Text>

Attend the argosy of mind.

And yet.

There is something there
moving in counterpoint to the Guess.

The other in your arms. The dance.

2.

And yet

the dance is nothing too

like you. Like the proposition

x resembles y

but only in the presence of z.

True or not true. Sea roses blossom by sea.

[Attend the argosy of mind — the phrase seemed accurate, but so pretentious. How long since argosy has been used as a straight word meaning a convoy of richly laden ships? But just such fragile but richly freighted intermittencies cross the sea of mind. The pomposity of the phrase ('attend,' 'argosy,' 'mind') is ridiculous, but the image it (barely) permits is accurate. Hence the 2nd line, responding to the doubt.]

15 June 2002

CAROLIN AND FRED

she left him for a job somewhere else
they gave her a good job
they gave her good students
she married one of them
who was 22 years old

he came to her wedding
he was sick and could hardly walk
he had to take two planes to get there
on the way back he got sicker
he got pneumonia
when he came home he went to the hospital

she never wrote to him or called
he was in the hospital
she never came to see him
he died
she didn't come to his funeral
she didn't even send an e-mail to the family

now he is some ashes in a brown wooden box in the ground
she is with her young husband somewhere else

I would say this is a true story except it makes me sick to my stomach
so I won't say anything at all.

15 June 2002

AN ASH TREE

something determined this one and that one the old
lay down in this place before something else happened to other people

but the shadow was this person these persons and the shadow was a blade
that cut apart what anybody says and leaves silence and somebody dead

so much comes between them it has to be used as a kind of glue
oil of absence a grease of being gone from each other

then it is allowed to come again the way it is easy
for a statue to stand where it is placed in the street

so that someone says that statue standing there is like the shadow of a tree
and such things account for the way people feel

because the ones who pass are looking for something that stands still.

15 June 2002

[variation on a text of 18 April 2002, *Is this a style...*]

RADIO

I see that they're going to play
Mein Herz schwimmt im Blut,
Bach, and I wonder
how I can stand that

listening to the absence
of her who did not come
to her lover's funeral,
perhaps like music

he had nothing more to give her
nothing practical,
just a chance to stand in the rain
remembering.

15 June 2002

COSMOLOGY LESSON

(from *Deniz kek Uryan*, the Mirsuvian Cosmology)

The world does not float in space. It is supported by a half-dome-like structure — like one ball balanced uneasy on another — itself supported by a great golden tray painted black to discourage the interest of thieves. The square tray or pedestal is mounted on prongs coming off and down at an angle from each corner. Each prong pierces an old yellowgreen tennis ball (left over from an earlier universe now simply a matter of legend or scholarly debate or cynic doubt). These tennis balls roll pretty freely and serve as wheels or bearings on which the whole world apparatus moves readily enough when pushed, but not so freely as to let it roll along of its own accord. A nudge is always needed to begin. Another day we will learn about those who presume to set it in motion, and how they do so if they do.

16 June 2002

If not lost
certainly not found.
It was cold that morning
when he still knew what it meant

something outside him
in a place called there
where things could be relied on to happen
by themselves

now he knew better
or knew nothing

this is not a history
this is a man lost
in his own house

so big the space around him
like an old king suddenly gone blind

but he was young, or no age
and could see, but what
 could he see
looking across the room
was as far as Milano,
why not, a cardboard box
could hold the rest of his life

he had come to the place
where shadows live
and take on
the substantial properties
of what they used to imitate
so poorly in the days of light

these hands are now the actual wolf
that used to leave its cartoon image on the plaster wall

of a real house, real wall,
only now he is the shadow,
his hands bite at him
trying to find their legendary ancient meat.

17 June 2002

THE ESSAY

Something blue
to the vocabulary happen

a knuckle to it
parched and sudden

you are the law
ion side this fence
the slats of answering
so many years

and it's still wet
there is a name for it
the body forgets

grenade launcher
pelican overhead

I have broken
the custom of doors

lost air's appetite
the mournfulness of meaning

Essay: I am not worried about I or about you. I am worried about about. I am worried about of. Some would think me one with few worries then. False. Every proposition implies tragedy. And to the tragic one tries to answer as the Athenians did by getting up and leaving the arena and entering the streets of a city. While it was still daylight. Plenty of time

to dissolve vocabulary into what sunlight and birdsong and vendors in the bazaar persuaded them was The Actual. There are some problems that can only be ignored. Scriptures are garbled exam questions mysterious schoolmasters distributed before they left the room. The more meaning they have the less attention we need to pay to them. We. I mean the ones together with me on this excursion. This picnic. You. We have no attention left to spare for such conundrums. In daylight it is enough work to find our way to the next shadow. I haven't figured out yet what we're to do at night.

hands between thighs

the painting sleeps

it is what you become

the heart, analysis.

18 June 2002

THE MOMENT

But what were the papers saying
in their day-old Dutch
losers losing bravely, the cute
smiles of nobody you know

old bread they toss
lovers from indifferent hands
a kind of game

letting a face show once in a while
as if there were somebody actual
living in the trees

old bread
no wine the miracle
is mediated
dimidiated
cut in half
with all our leavings

a girl loose in her clothes
waiting by the bathroom door
her smile focused on the middle of the air

in the heart of orgasm
a vapid little stare.

19 June 2002

Touch this
to the fire
and put it out

a silent word

The sound means nothing till the hearer makes it sense
says Luciano Berio.

I say silence is a word.
The final answer.

19 June 2002

AN INVESTIGATION

It is something to know something about it.
It is comfort or it is a certain number of feet
They know how to, and it is moving when they are
Although it is not natural. It is not.
But it is something to know. A crucible
With something in it that is molten and that shines.
It is known by color. Colors are numbers.
Light is a letter.

Light is a letter. A letter is part
Of an alphabet or else something sent.
It is something sent from one to another by way of
An alphabet. It goes right through the alphabet
Almost invariably. This is a footnote about light
And is not finished. But one turns away.
For a time. Always there is this
Tendency to turn back to time.

The amazements are definite. It looks
At what is written and it wonders. A word
To begin with is to wonder at. Later it is used
To wonder with. But to begin with
A word is. It is as it is with children.
Children read best. Children read best
Before they know how to read.
When a word still is.

When a word
Isn't lost in connections somewhere
Like a person you love very much
Lost in a crowd forever the tears stream down.
No. the word still is and the child has it.

As long as the child has the word the word is safe.

....

[19 June 2002]

DREAM KILLER

A dream lost to the mower —
every sleeper has his enemy
to end the vision

that is what the circumstantial world is,
somniaicide, killer of dream,

the city does it with a garbage truck the
country does it with a mower a chainsaw a bird in the window
screaming

until the dream stretches too wide to squeeze them also in
to the frail framework of its telling

and the sphincter tears.

The wake happens
and the shabby waking mind is frantic
to put everything in place

before there is nothing left but this place, this noise.

It could be music. It could be Innana
at the last gate, but the dream shatters
before she can take off her final garment

which will it be, does she save the breasts for last
or down below,

or maybe the goddess
final gesture lifts

away the face veil so we know
who's standing naked there
before us

before she can get through the gate and find
the miserable phantom she has come to bring
back to daytime

before he can see her before
I can see her standing in the gate.

her story happens every night.

My story. The core
of sleeping where you try to find
the central fact that makes your whole life run,
the one she went down there to find
before she can come back to life,
before the world makes sense.

Only down there and strip to find it.

And as I burrowed in the fact of dream
I also enterprised this unveiling

but the mower with his truck came
a different animal was calling
and the machine of things denied my final scholarship

no one in the universe now
knows what I was dreaming
and what the thing I think is me is down there wanting.

20 June 2002

back cold

cheek hot

sun over

trees standing

20 June 2002

MARKERS

1.

DON'T DRY OUT MY BONSAI, YOU!

Give me back to the priest
Need more salt on my tongue more oil
On my skin more holy water wash away my sin

I'm like a dry pine or cypress kind or yew
And you're like rain, you, you know what I'm saying,
This is that frank and unavoidable embarrassment a love song
Come get wet all over me at last again
Because you are the street and I am the car
You hear me my roar is the same as your self
We are locked in the same sound finally
So you can speak you can say the word
This music comes to sweep you off your feet
Streets and cars and oil and trees
The whole universe is up to such tricks
A young red fox tumbling through the grass.

2.

DON'T DRY OUT MY FOUNTS OF YOUTH!

The cushions on the lawn chairs are diamonded with dew.
The world gets us a little wet when we meet
Morning is a dangerous time, we wake oblivious
All those revolutions in the night, I won't and I will
Then I do and I don't. And it's all right

Because the sun is grammatical and the leaves are wet
And the striped cushion waiting for your skin.

(poor terrible I wasn't a psychic knee now,
now, a day is late, but still with the sly
curative power of distant touch,
thunder a dozen miles away makes shiver here)

3.

DON'T TRY DOUBT; 'WHY' BLANCHES YOU.

Adventuress. It all belongs to you anyhow.
Don't examine the bill of sale, your name's
Engraved along my shaft. Be silver
Till gold. Be diamond till real estate.
Hold land. Sit on the earth
Like someone with a thousand cows.
Milk these. Drink eternity. Age
That cheesy stuff called poesy. The gap
Between us is immense, powerful,
Unbelievable. So don't believe it.
Leap. Into my neuroses fall
Bleeding deliciously from the infinite
Infinitesimal wounds of somebody's desire.

20 June 2002