

6-2003

junD2003

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### Recommended Citation

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Sunrise. The birds arrive.

One sun ball just up over Nashawena  
two grackles one gull good morning

5 AM. Vicissitudes of sleep.

Waking. The light inside  
is anxious for its sister light outside.

Three grackles and the gull cries.

Everything is being everything again --  
a statement Dr Johnson would find

difficult to argue with but easy to despise  
on formal grounds, circularity  
of predication, fierce round red

just over the beach on Nashawena Island  
where Highland cattle stand all day long  
baffled by the undrinkable sea.

7 June 2003

=====

Bearing the conversation of the sun  
is to be alone again

all my soliloquies  
a fishing boat

becalmed on the bay  
silhouettes of anxious men

a cat on the steps  
also looking for prey.

I am trying to distract you,  
turning from my confession to the cat.

7 June 2003 Ck

=====

I love you for your ball of twine  
waxed, nautical, prone  
to hold the knot we fold

pli selon pli he said,  
a major constellation  
in the smallest sky

and for the ripe avocado  
that slips its peel  
so easy for your salad

as if the whole history of art  
focused on these fingers now  
pushing green pulp on white plate.

7 June 2003

## **ART HISTORY**

they auction  
my heart off  
till I'm at peace.

7 VI 03 Ck

## PESSOA?

So many incarnations to live this once.

In my last life I used many heteronyms (more than you know)

to speak as much as I could tell of my one mind.

In this life I write in all their voices (and still more)

but sign my single name to all.

Each folly finds its proper fool at last.

Ah if even now I could divide me

into all my instances

how much you'd finally understand me

when I wasn't me anymore but all those

but maybe Fate would lose my actual address?

Fate never does. Fate knows.

I go on talking with my Angel

and let the world listen as she will.

7 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

=====

What had begun as sun  
sheered into thinnest  
cloud suddenly visible as such  
--bluegrey angelwing---  
only when the sun  
found its way behind.

Kandinsky. Deep space  
inside the lover the lover  
never stops fathoming.  
Some words are liars  
from the beginning, from  
the first battle sloshing  
through the trenches of the sky,

and all the colors we know  
and name so gaudy are  
the blood of that first spilling,

shattered vessels, the light  
parceled into hues,  
saturation, abstraction,  
categories, Spiritual  
pressures to behave

a woman with her man.

Own me, I am about the light,

I came to take it back

but found my way inside you

better than the high known road

the little entrance but never ending face.

Initiation. Red lines peeled away

from the luminous blue places

where the dye soaks into the paper.

Sunrise is long over

and we are stuck with what we see

7 June 2003

Cuttyhunk



=====

I thought I had something to tell you  
but I forgot between the bedroom and the marina  
and the last thing I knew  
a gull was carrying something away

no one could be sure  
though the Freemasons had their own ideas  
if an idea can be said to be owned  
and the higher initiates of Ghee  
were sure it had happened before

whereas I'm with no one  
unsure and in love  
with all the specious accidents  
that interrupt the world

tough guys don't wear socks.

7 June 2003 Cuttyhunk

=====

Foreskin guitar

your belt

somebody's dawn

shoveled down

the throat of the ear

all your suicides

sell,

all the brittle

hacksaw blades

unstoppable pipe,

turtledove

caught in the throat

a cough that kills

by music

six old saints

sprawled in the sand

trying to remember

what they loved so much

about the likes of you

Alex up to her hocks in the Ganges

is pleased to remember me

me, a man, as if

I were some novel she once read

somewhere in between

The Secret Garden and Swann in Love

all my intricate details forgot.

7 June 2003

## AT A GLANCE

Supposing myself  
to be a mourning dove  
sort of public presence all  
embonpoint and solemn  
fluting

I have proposed  
a monument to all  
such ponderous virtuosos  
in the form of a newspaper  
published every day of the year telling whatever  
comes to mind to anyone  
fool enough to read it

and then they'll know  
their own reactions,  
never  
what the birds are really saying  
breasts puffed out, ardent  
at their seed despite  
the tea-time rain  
snarling in from the sea.

2.

So you will wind up with me,  
a slim catastrophe  
in fashionable clothes

bought south of Spring St.

for what my mother

would have called a song

and how can I get out

of our relationship, affection

has no divorce court to resolve

the boring differences,

dissolve the eternities

we tried to lock in weekday afternoons

but I still love your clothes.

3.

And in the local rain

the local green

generic potted plant

stands healthy wet

on our new deck,

so much mist right now

the long slim leaves

hold all the color

that there is,

Gerhard Dorn knew this,

the bronzy grackle

strutting over green  
the colors of the Work  
proceeding in the warm  
horseshit holds  
the infant metals safe  
until they learn to speak

Gerhard Dorn knew  
how to tickle silver  
into singing, knew how  
to tease darkness and fire  
into the ardent  
silence that is gold. Gold  
tumbles from the crucible

and his wife is barely  
stirring on her sweaty pillows,

*everything comes back  
to us who know the colors*

and the whole tradition  
of the Occidental wisdom  
I can teach you  
from one look,

*look at each color and remember.*

7 June 2003

=====

As by honor or  
a sea welcome  
the old language  
gorse sparse  
scratched into  
a kid's quick  
wits mostly by  
mockery

a father humiliates  
a son endures

8 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

## *Le non du père*

I watch a father playing catch with his son. The little boy is on the downhill side so when he misses, and he misses a lot, he has to chase the ball as it rolls down the street. The father stands and watches this, smiling. It does not seem to occur to either of them to change positions. The father pitches balls that are easy to miss, bouncing grounders or high fast balls. He stands smiling, watching his son run down the hill again and again. The son in doing all this seems most interested in learning to pitch, to get the ball and pitch it back, like a real pitcher, to his father. On one of his returns uphill with the ball, he finds the father trying to interest a younger daughter in tossing the ball. She runs away. The boy waits patiently through the levels of his humiliation. By now he's tuckered enough to walk rather than run down the hill after the rolling ball. The pace of the game is slower. When the father occasionally misses a catch from his son, he shouts something I can't make out, turns, and slowly walks back to where the ball, uphill, begins to roll back to meet him. When the boy gets the ball back, catching it, when he does, in a sad old hand-me-down fielder's glove, he sets up for his next pitch. This is a big production, styling, as seen on TV, a real southpaw leg in the air windup. The boy is, for the moment, safe in his fantasy. Maybe neither he nor his father will wake. But just as I begin to think this, they do at last change places. The father misses the first lob from his son, it sails over his head, he turns round and watches the ball roll out of sight, then realizes he has to retrieve it. Slowly he walks down the hill. And when he gets back with the ball, the life is gone from the game. Fortunately for him, the little girl is in some kind of trouble, and needs to be attended to. Father and son go to the girl.

8 June 2003

Sunday morning on Cuttyhunk



=====

A photograph of me in heaven  
not so easy to make out  
but there I am beneath a fig tree  
looking a little foolish  
with a bottle of wine under my arm  
(Chateau Pison '27) as if it  
were the loaf of bread I'm holding  
in the hand at the end of the arm  
while my other hand is waving at you  
and my big black-rimmed glasses  
firmly set around my squinty eyes  
just like a man coming home from work  
and I suppose I am, but there are  
no newspapers in heaven,  
just grandmother stories and desperate  
avant-garde post-fictional narrations  
the mourning doves keep whispering at my feet

where they pick at the fallen figs  
and I wonder why I'm not in hell  
with all the canny Wanters  
I thought I was, but don't worry,  
hell is heaven too, who knows  
whose blood is hidden in the wine,

and now that I look close

I'm not sure that is my face  
I'm wearing for the occasion--  
a Latin word that means a falling  
or a setting as of the sun  
or any kind of going down,

8 June

Cuttyhunk

=====

Will the paulownia  
be in flower  
this year in  
the graveyard by the sea?

And who is asking,  
come back arid  
from love for Valéry  
too much poetry

but he still wonders  
what can be wrong  
with so much beauty,  
*that peaceful rooftop*

*where the doves are pecking*  
or this year on a cool  
Sunday after so much rain  
will the strange Japanese

tree with such odd fruit  
deep purple flowers  
be ready for them to see  
in the little graveyard

where there is no church  
only the ocean hitting  
on the shore below  
busy with angrier birds?

8 June 2003

Cuttyhunk