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## *Can this be the ordinary animal?*

So many were waiting at the zoo that day  
For their first sight of what had never  
Been shown in this country before,

The Ordinary Animal, not a lion not an elk  
Not a snake and not an owl,  
Something before and beyond them all

They could hear it moving around in its enclosure  
A building big enough for an elephant  
But the sounds it made weren't very big

Fluttering more than stomping, but with some writhing  
And rearing and growling in it too.  
Smart people kept their eyes on the keepers

Who looked worried. Am I completely in control  
Of this situation? is not a doubt confined to zoo attendants  
And there seemed to be police on the edges of the crowd.

You can never be too careful.  
In the other pools and cages the animals were silent  
As if they too were in for a big surprise

And why not, since they were even closer to the Rule  
Of which they were such distinct exceptions.  
And here comes the rule itself

The doors are opening the cameramen are praying  
Even the pickpockets and perverts are paying attention  
Then suddenly it was there, docile, in plain sunlight,

Its large eyes looking easily about this way and that,  
The ordinary animal no one had ever dreamed of before,  
Gentle, strong, handsome, a little scary,

But it looked tired too, a little frightened,

And strangely old, old, as if it had been traveling for years  
To come so new into the world.

13 January 2001

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Why do you play your flute?

— Because a doctor meets only the sick.

Why don't I hear it when you play?

— You haven't run your fingers down my skin.

Who taught you music?

— I never learned, I only forgot.

13 January 2001

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all my learning  
is forgetting

all my touching  
is letting go

13 January 2001

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There's something simple

I have to say.

There, I've said it at last.

14 January 2001

## A PERSISTENCE

{DIG~IR} Nin-zu-g~ir2 {DIG~IR} Nina-Ur g~al-lu2 šir-bur-la (=Lagaš) dumu Gu-ni-du ud eš3-Zu-G~ir2 mu-du3 a mu-ru. e2 {DIG~IR} Nina mu-du3; g~al-ib mu-du3; ki-nir mu-du3; ba-ga mu-du3; e2-dam mu-du3; e2 Ga2-tum3-dug3 mu-du3; ti-aš2(agx)-ra mu-du3.

When Ur-**{GOD}**Nina (servant of **{GOD}**Nina, Lady of the Water), king of Lagash (*šir-bur-la*, ‘abundance of lamps’), son of Gu-ni-du (possibly Akkadian: cf. Arabic *jundi:yun*, ‘soldier’), verily built the temple of G~irzu (sword-skill), verily (he) dedicated (it) to Ning~irzu (Lady of Sword Skill). (He) verily built the House of **{GOD}**Nina; (he) verily built the Great Weir; (he) verily built the Orchard; (he) verily built the Dairy; (he) verily built the House of the Wives; (he) verily built the House of Gatumdug (Sweet Bearer of the Cup); (and he) verily built the Archery Range (*ti-ra-ašagx*).

*When Urnina, servant of Nina, the Goddess of Waters, King of Shirburla the City of Lights, son of Gunidu the Warrior, when he built the temple of Swordskill, he dedicated it to Ningirzu, Lady of Sword Skill. Yea, he built the House of the Goddess Nina, he built the great Weir, he built the Orchard, he built the House of Cows, he built the House of Wives, yea, he built the House of Gatumdugu, the Sweet Cupbearer, and he built the Place of the Arrows.*

And Nina’s waters Anna’s waters Annan’s waters  
Walk quietly today past this house.

14 January 2001

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Time to let some of it speak.  
Only a little — the *Weinberg*  
Of Santa Maddalena in Bolzano

Church, hill, house where a friend was born,  
The vineyard of my friend — a Bible sound  
To where we were.

Find a place to eat. The eternal veal  
Of Italy, mithraic bones of rock and hill  
The never boring darkness inside the wine.

15 January 2001

Something old I found tomorrow

Because everything comes down to you

*Song song old underwear*

I thought what it is like when it is when and why  
I thought no better than a *song with bread*

*So much much for thinking*

Or how so often when a call comes it is  
What one is doing when waiting for a call

the nerves you touch

in calling are calling

16 January 2001

## HORN

how close and then  
or the horns of an ox  
which one of them  
has picked up from the ground  
and scooped it hollow  
to hold their what

what do they own  
they would stuff into a horn

they who would try to pack a cloud into a knife

who bring out little magazines  
and run away when the little words actually mean

16 January 2001

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I need to keep a diary  
To keep my poems clear of my life  
And my life clear of poetry

But is this a diary entry or a poem?  
Or just a bad idea?

17 January 2001

## THREE STUDIES FROM THE ZODIAC

Tail ripeness

Change

Invisible head moon woman ocean sun

Message good luck heaven man

Head heaven

Ripeness invisible good luck change ocean

Message woman sun man

Moon.

Moon change ocean tail

Good luck

Man sun message woman head

Heaven ripeness invisible

17 January 2001

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escort by dream

tabled motion  
: reviewed by judges  
at the long trestle

your whole life

18 January 2001

*Liar's Lyres*  
My new book

Leave out all the words  
And something's still there

Next morning  
Girl gone head lightnined

*Hangover of the poem*

18 I 01

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pick word in other tongue  
tip means [compassion without pity  
love without cling  
touch without grasp  
responsibility without ownership]

or as we say in Panslavic:

χομπασσιον ω/ο πιτυ  
λοπε ω/ο χλινγ  
τουχη ω/ο γρασπ  
ρεσπονσιβιλιτυ ω/ο οωνερσηιπ

while the wise men of old said

χομπασσιον ω/ο πιτυ  
λοπε ω/ο χλινγ  
τουχη ω/ο γρασπ  
ρεσπονσιβιλιτυ ω/ο οωνερσηιπ

maybe there is no way to say it at all.

18 January 2001

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“She will only give it to the clean pirates”

do something to give  
give something to clean  
and do, and do, and she

will only will only,  
give it to the clean  
she who will only only

clean on the way  
to do something to give  
it to the clean

she who will to will  
give it to give it to

then who are those pirates who are these  
pirates are all the pirates  
clean and clean a characteristic of pirates in general

or are there dirty pirates clean pirates and in-between  
and she will only be only  
then does she mean she will give it only to clean  
pirates not only give it to

give it to only to give it to only to give it

who is she giving it to and (here's the keychange)  
what is it.

18 January 2001

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Cast of cars  
A postcard  
From a year

*A whole*  
Animal white  
Animal brown

*Green green grey*  
Long time ago white Ford

19 January 2001

## DEUX ETUDES

1.  
Little hand,  
little hand

How hard  
Music is  
To be that easy

*Be small be small*

2.  
What a terrible thing music is  
That even silence doesn't silence it.

19 January 2001  
Rhinebeck

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they sent me an etude  
in eleven sharps and one catastrophe

why change your sex  
it changes for you  
when you get old

until only angels  
can tell female from male

and there are no angels.

19 January 2001  
Rhinebeck

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Blue bells  
How many  
Months from now

How many mouths  
Will grumble  
Their complaining noises  
That is our Prayer to Spring?

19 January 2001  
Rhinebeck

VEGAN

Hurtless  
Smell cucumbers  
Far off kitchen

Always everybody dreaming.

19 January 2001  
Rhinebeck

*CAPRICCIO*

I'll have one opera  
with some  
chamber music on the side  
but hold the dying.

19 January 2001  
Rhinebeck

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A book and its reader  
are soon parted.

Reading a lot  
teaches promiscuity  
if not polygamy.

All those books you love,  
'devour'  
then close and move on to the next —

the text that waits for you  
over the horizon of the word.

19 January 2001  
Rhinebeck

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the tenderness sometimes of music  
as if this strange interval you're hearing now  
is a childhood friend you suddenly remember  
sound of her voice smell of her hair

19 January 2001