

9-2001

sepA2001

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## WINDS

And out of that marinade of heat and haze and rain last night  
the mistral woke.

And bad dreams even knew how to end.

Sixty-eight degrees and a breeze among the linden leaves  
the big-leafed young ones, adolescents  
mooning their hearts.

I am morning,  
that is all I know.  
All the rest  
the day will tell me  
stone by stone.

Hammer a nail  
Into the air  
Use it to hang up  
A photo of the one you love.

How we talk. As if anyone  
could be a picture —  
you have to work  
hard life after life to be a picture on the wall

and even then they can hardly hear  
a word you're saying if you even ever said.

We have them here too, shifts of wind  
from the Gulf then swing round from Maine,

we have our own weather, thank you,  
we don't need the Franks,

it's just the names  
we miss



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Staring at them, the old names  
who were my selves my slaves my mastering  
Presences all over that sweet coast  
from which the weird wind blew

I belonged to the meat of them the shimmer of their views  
Nobody wants to hear what I knew

And I don't want to read this endless book I wrote.

1 September 2001

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The car goes by they call that music  
mine is a little German hand that touches wood

touché means changed, experimented with  
at knife point, button wielder, a wineglass  
sings your wet finger

— so here we are  
the Pronoun Family safe in France  
of wherever this is that words still strive  
transgenderedly (can you say that?) to inscribe  
color values in a blind man's heart.

2 September 2001 Full Moon

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Weird small things growing green  
huzzah for spindly cacti for  
overactive underwatered rattle-  
snake plant called Motherinlaw's  
Tongue, huzzah for dying bonsai,  
aloes half white with too much  
something or too little, Christ,  
how little we know of what we need,  
sorry, they all are me, and vice  
exactly is this versa, I can't tell  
my heart from a hole in the ground.

Because things die. Because  
love comes back to life, dumb  
as autumn flowers, don't they know  
what's coming, yes, last night  
it was cold. Or we were cold.  
When will I ever learn the difference?

2 September 2001

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to escape these  
local impersonations of the gods  
is a good work for men

2 September 2001

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Things get lost  
with no one to tell them  
to

the wind  
won't listen  
and the night  
has other kinds of sex  
on its mind

wouldn't you just love to know  
the amorous emptiness  
disguised as the dark

sometimes I pick up a word  
and put it down  
why bother  
when she's not there to say it  
to

and then again  
I am what the word  
picks up

I learn my lesson  
I say it anyway  
even if nobody's listening

it all is.

3 September 2001

## SINGLES BAR

What happens after full moon  
The house stays home

All our conversations leave records in the world  
These memoranda in fact comprise the world

Not thought into place talked into place  
Birds review their options as they fall

Old men learn why things are as they are  
Only when it's too late to change

Self absorbed but not self aware a monkey hunts his fleas  
Shouldn't the doctor and the patient have the same kind of chair

A wheelbarrow by the outhouse to carry them home  
Welfare administrators howling at the moon

Every day the same man came into the bar  
We wore bright green spring onions woven into our hair

One day the caravan was late the sun was lost  
Heaven depends for its order on human arrangements

All the rest of it is chaos this is a rose  
Ordered into place by seeing the eyes talk

One day he said he didn't feel sincere  
She brought bunches of organic carrots and sat on the lawn

It's the bar stool not the beer that makes the bar  
Chair means flesh in any language and good bye

3 September 2001

[SINGLES BAR, continued, 2]

Returning to the formal after smoking outside  
Her ball gown hooped around her ears

Imagine the serious invader the svelte valley  
Inappropriate signage on the pinball machine

The wrong language spoken between the hills  
Every language a valley of its own

The glacier melts the circus tent blows down  
Desire solidifies as mass and comes slow to life

Penetration possession gold chain around the ankle  
Evident uproar of the failed rump parliament

Two fingers squirming in a narrow sign  
Sweat lodge at morning drink something black

Orient acres orientate acremen west of time  
Every day the same clock tower has different birds

Be careful with the rape scene the camera stick  
What do you call the thing you put the money in

4 September 2001

[SINGLES BAR, continued, 3]

And now what do you have to say  
Blank French notebook and a head without dreams

You lost them didn't you at the gate of ivory  
The gate where the false dream called the world is born

A stillborn dream then a morning without a mother  
Lost consequences a little desert town bourgade

You are the most one I expected to see  
I am thrilled at your door we come in together

Sometimes you is the name I call myself sometimes one calls me  
Could there be a bird without a feather

Did you say a world without weather  
Or was it the painted desert where they touched last time

Hundred degrees at midnight in Nogales night glare  
Sometimes neon is the truest light of all

The happiest man in America is a candle burning in your porch  
Sometimes the language only seems to be speaking

Dear greek dear smooth chained hips of logic  
Dear monster chained to maiden chained to rocks

5 September 2001

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What we do is little  
It is climbing upon a chair  
the Giant Mother left there  
to help us out

up the word that's like a wall  
grab the rope that's like a smile  
and haul the weary meat that's me  
out into ordinary

life where everything is true  
having no other way to be  
selfless empty glad.

5 September 2001

## THE SECRET

There was a wind and there usually wasn't. It was one of those days when the world seemed to be trying to tell him something. It had been trying so long, years and years, and today it was close. He was close to paying attention. The secret is released by paying attention. Releasing attention. He was trying to listen.

It had to do with a sick old carpenter who kept missing work. A carpenter with a funny little scornful but abashed smile under a ratty grey mustache. The carpenter was going to the hospital.

He saw the carpenter's face in his mind's eye. The face was the same, old, mustache, little smile. Now the secret was close. Then he saw the carpenter as a young man, brown silly mustache of a young man. Silly preoccupations of a young man, so earnest, so wrong, so young. A boy, even, going out with girls, choosing one or being chosen, getting married, living with her, an Irish girl, an Irish woman, getting old, a sick old Irish woman he lived with now, his wife in a wheelchair, the secret was very close now, the carpenter on his way to the hospital, his own body sick, he didn't know how, sick legs, kidneys, eyes, insides. The smile.

Everything was the same. That was close to the secret. A man was young and now he's old. No. that's the wrong way round. A man is old and once was young. That's closer, not right, nothing's right, the man is sick, he'll die, we all do, later or sooner, that's not the secret, that's common

knowledge. But the secret is nearby. A man's life. Someone's life, someone's life is held together. What holds it together. What is the secret, that is the secret. He thinks he knows it now, archaic Greek kouros young boy statue smile. Old carpenter. Young man becoming carpenter. Making things. Looking at them in his mind's eye before he makes them. Not bothering to come to work. A dumb smile. Dying, Irish girls, sickness, telephones, excuses, hospitals, money. All quiet now. The wood is quiet. The wind is blowing. The smile is the same.

5 September 2001

**[re Douglas Messerli text]**

How can you know me so well?  
By writing, that is the answer.  
How can you know me so well?  
Certainly not by reading the words I wrote.  
You can only know me by writing them yourself.  
When you write them yourself  
You turn into me,  
    The other side of me, the other kind of me, the kind  
That means what the words mean  
And nothing but not,  
    Not all the clamor and squaredance and bullshit of what  
any I might decide to mean

But just what the words  
Wriggle and spit.  
That is the best me.

*Outside the skin is what is left of hands.*

This is the most thing you make me say I said.

+++

write with a hammer  
erase with a cloud  
nobody's listening  
so everything's allowed

write with a jackknife  
read with the moon  
everything you ever  
needed is gone

you're left alone  
with what you desire  
more frequent than stars  
your lewd priorities

[5 IX 01]

The imagined sharpness women allow to stand in the stall half-hearing the water circulate through the blind network of the plumbing, how dark inside water, inside water. Like anything. And when the refusal breaks in your hands you have nothing left of that chill decorum, not even Sunday.

For lo! the week is broken, and the empire of measurement is no more.

No measurement but measure. Measure is pure.

Don't bug me with purity, a cup is a hole in the ground gone a-wandering, looking for its original clay. Earth can take care of its own only so long. So long, we say, we'll see you Sunday, in church, in hell, in boredom, in Boulder, nobody goes to church anymore, you know? You are a dictionary of moves, a flicker white-bellied through the garden twilight, take reason to mean rage, take intelligence to mean a finger on the soft of your inner arm. Amen.

But the sluices  
Have to open  
I read this  
With my leg

Along the skinhairs  
Liberty  
Of interpretation

Lightning in the skin the only sky

Oily distances  
she rakes with light

+++

a group is a grab, *the skin is what is left of hands* is what I meant all the while.

am here because you reach out to

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Abashed but a boat one channels on  
One ever in the wake of one (Desire)  
One normal in the reek of out

Breathed air (Language) the carnal  
Is plausible the seas all are vague  
Because one has come to one

Thinking to be enough for both and is  
It makes sense when together but  
Waves apart one wonders and

All one's faith (smell of what one  
Said to one lingers) required  
Woke stumbling down the hallway

Like an animal who has found  
The way to die is to live forever  
One falls home into the lap of one

6 September 2001