

12-2001

decC2001

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## THE BARE TABLE

1.

The bare table  
loves me

the newspapers love me  
only when they're a few days old  
and from another country

where the herrings come from  
or the music

as long as I can't read them too well

when I was no years old  
fish and fruit were wrapped by retailers in newspaper  
to take home

now I can never go home  
now nothing is worthy of being wrapped in words  
even the kinds of words we have these days

we wrap in images  
and we eat in the dark  
watching other people eating other things

2.

I love the bare table right back  
I say: I love you wood  
I love your empty grain  
with the gleam of rain on your skin  
and no food

and I watch the birds at their campaign  
and imagine for a moment that all fish are safe in the sea

3.

The bare table loves me  
for other reasons

we have sat here for hours  
man and wood together  
and it remembers

amity is easy  
to remember  
so rare

but what is amity?

The silence of a bare table  
in the howling city of light.

4.

The bare table loves me

because of all I forget  
and when I am trying to remember  
I stare at it blankly

o love is so blank go lightly  
over the surface and never come back

only the surface always the surface

what we see  
is what supports the world  
I think

and the table thinks this with me too  
although it is ridiculous to think a table thinks

Only a chair can think —  
a table is all silence and remembering and letting me see.

13 December 2001

## THE OTHER STORY

There is another story  
waiting for the blue lady  
to get done with the newspaper  
and look at the bare table

There is another story  
on the other side of what we see

and another sun is busy there  
with a different kind of hydrogen  
a universe without the number One

This sounds like nonsense when I say it  
so it's likely to be true

or true enough.

We have come to a place where only the truth will serve.

13 December 2001

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Cloud architectures, chemistry of mirrors,  
I wait for you on the subway steps  
knowing there is an earth below our earth  
and a city down there full of people

and look at you, you're beautiful and quick and good  
but under you there is another you  
bare as Ishtar and no man knows

but there is nothing under a table,  
nothing but our own legs and feet and shadows,  
the crumbs that leap free from our appetites,  
poppy seeds from sleepy breakfasts  
mooning about you,  
nothing but the cat and the mouse and the ant

and there is nothing under the ant  
the ant carries the whole world on its back.

13 December 2001

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I had a corner  
And I set the world in it

Threw a soft black cloth over it  
Not velvet but something yielding

And the world went to sleep there  
Dreaming of lines of shadows of edges of pain

Whatever you dream about in a corner  
And left me alone and simple in the middle of the room

Dreaming of this of horses galloping of fountains of smoke  
Whatever you dream about in the middle

Even in the middle of nothing  
There is always something waiting to wake up.

13 December 2001

## FINDING A PLACE IN TIME BED

a contradance, in mist, receding  
Zenable landscapes of morning  
afore you get to work the aft  
circumstance that Jewess on the run  
through all too orderly nazi trees

Beauty, in her pose of doing something,  
Beauty busy with 'the production of time'

for she's what's the matter with our mind.

14 December 2001

## NEWS OF THE DAY

The terrorists are being bombed to bits in their caves  
Ramadan is almost over tomorrow the dark of the moon  
I hear a jouncing noise a squirrel landing on seed  
Black-capped chickadee temporarily leaving town.

14 December 2001

# NASALIZATION AS INDEX OF INFANTILE FREQUENTATIVITY

Jounce bounce boing trounce pounce  
Blue animal leaping through neighbor air

14 December 2001

CLAUDIA

Oh the poor dear her face  
has been looked at too often

all the her of her  
has been rubbed away

like bronze St Peter's toe in Rome  
first it gets shiny and then it's gone.

14 December 2001

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To believe in God is holding love in escrow  
safe until its proper Landlord comes

and here you are again and again  
right now we're dark in Santa Monica bistro

until my account in heaven is depleted  
just dust mice and boarding passes scattered on the floor —

life laws its liens around us, doesn't it,  
and after a while the novel gets tired of my love.

15 December 2001

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And I could say again  
in mirror speech  
what the glass is always saying,  
double barrel trouble

— you can never have and touch this thing you see

— you will never see this very thing again

So you can break all the mirrors or go blind

Or you can build a boat out of change and loss and breaking  
and float in it till all the dying stops  
then see where you are, dove shit on your collar,

a sodden mountain underneath your stern  
and all your pretty daughters dancing  
naked in the sudden apple trees.

15 December 2001

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Taking measure is a breeze  
remembers Waikiki  
I went to watch the watchers  
initiates beneath an interminable wave  
purer than logic under sea salt  
—I used to think only prepositions could be clean.

16 December 2001

## THIS COUNTRY WHERE THE WHITE MAN RULED

And every little one of us a statue of himself became  
Tortured into the rigid grammar of the empty street  
Terrible blood-drenched goddess the girl next door.

Of course all Kali's bleeding comes from us,  
the blood alone from her.  
We are the ones who wound the mother.  
Every goddess we worship forgives only ourselves.

16 December 2001

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I hurt her  
it was the sole  
transaction  
I could master  
the blood  
wrote my name  
on her forehead.

16 December 2001

*(An incident on Brown Street, ca. 1942, starring Joan Mulhare as the goddess.)*

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CONDENSARE?

Somewhere inside  
The poem lies.  
The rest of it  
Sometimes tells the truth.

16 December 2001

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guilt for little things  
can blink the big ones

why did I wear this  
spotted tie not

why was I born.

16 XII 01

## BETHLEHEM

Asking the wrong questions  
they came to the cave

how will we translate this  
into crimson and gold

there's always some animal nearby  
no matter what the weather

ox wolf worm crow

an animal is something like an answer  
I have forgotten

which kind of animal you were  
remind me

the cave is too dark  
to see anything but this point of light

light blinds  
we know that from the sky

what kind of answer  
can a color give

does it howl  
does it rest in your lap

and you hear her breathing  
and think you see tears

in her eyes as she is leaving  
as she is beginning to remember

I will love you forever  
they whisper in the dark

it no longer matters  
who hears them

they want everybody to know  
especially the wolf

especially the teenage mother  
shielding her infant from questions

but then I saw you crying  
and the world began to change.

16 December 2001

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There is a universe  
close beyond your scarlet  
fingernails just  
scratch the air  
until some music falls  
lifeless from the copper  
wire cage all round us  
to keep your fantasies  
safe from the static  
of the usual and there you are  
Nero of the hour  
listening to time burn  
moral architectures  
smoking rubble  
mystical debris.

17 December 2001

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I'm mad at someone but the light says Who?  
those Viennese embarrassments my feelings  
are hard to travel with in the jungles of Indiana  
where ex-nuns sleep beneath their home-made looms.

Because I was a wanderer once I wandered  
naïve as sunshine in what I thought a gypsy world  
but I was only Late Victorian flatfoot  
collecting clues to embed in ormolu, experiences

of an actual world lost in the sensuous  
semantic depravity of recurrent rhyme.  
But when you're free of getting what you want  
the want comes clean. The freezing rain out there  
masquerades as morningshine. I love to be fooled.

17 December 2001

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Not to stay, to stone.  
Not to want, to wait.  
Is this what they mean  
When they say  
God bless America?

17 XII 01

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Geese barking overhead  
What I remember  
Reduces to a poinsettia  
On the cool porch

Intensity of bract  
Christmas Star a tree of them  
We saw in Germany  
And we have one

In opulent uneasy  
Chastity alone with the light.

17 December 2001

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So it gets brighter after all  
Cars understand these things better than people  
They know how to go, but they go,  
They leave behind a picture of some boy's holy blue mother  
And a statue of a Roman satirist up to his kneecaps in surf.

17 XII 01

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This would be poetry  
if you were in it

instead it's the wind  
uneasy in dead trees

there has to be devotion  
to make it work,

Lacan or backside,  
anything you really mean.

One fungous blanket  
covers all kinds of sleep.

17 December 2001