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Conceive it elaborate
a mission in belief
writing down the forms of words
on foreign televisions
such things he knows
in towns he's never been
no ten no three
no one can find him here

a sending — an apostolate
into the bowels of language
where percepts turn into shit
he trusts the color
and everything that's made
screams out for his attention

the whole day a conference
Write me Write me says the day
Carve me into the attention
Put me into language the way
you'd buy Danish modern
till you can get real furniture

he gapes at everything, it tells
him a story he could listen to
forever, everything is true,
how could he make up
this white monogrammed ashtray
these papyrus-like rayon drapes
color of undersea, the young
beech tree under the terrace
rainwet bark tight as leather pants,
churchbells for an hour, soccer
players getting married, the two
kilometer long straight path
in the old gardens, how

can he tell himself a story though

that has no you in it?
Even the crows outside
sound different, everything
has a different word to say
but it's your word he wants
unsilenced into the light
the way a screw tightens in oak

undreamable separations.
And all of it is fixed in the sense
he has of himself, it dwindles,
wind blows, his sheep walk
up the imagination stolid
and complex (all that wool)
at once, a tangle
of motive and opportunity
but where is the crime

except the world around him
nine-thirty and still light
quiet bicycles slithering past.

30 July 2000
Hannover

I feel as tired as those summer nights in Naroling
(church bells again, final flourish of day)
when the last light would catch the fluttering of my eyes
and I'd go where the dark is made.

30 July 2000
Hannover

So wanting is never legitimate
just normal, so the specifics
of anyone get involved in the long
academy of desire, built
like a castle in another age,

a syllabus in this, impregnable,
the things I'm always
wanting from you, the admin-
istration building is as usual
the oldest building on campus

unrelenting idiom of want
burrowing out towards everybody but
the special testimony of the heart
rings from the blunt carillon
bells bong and the place goes nuts
when all the theory fits the single fact.

30 July 2000
Hannover

THE TRAVELER

Keep trying to spell mercy with an i,
wherever I go it intrudes on the rug's pattern
as if Mecca kept moving in the night
which God forbid. Geography is a root compassion
that things stay where they fall and let me touch them
here beneath the avenue of beeches to the dome
how silly copper looked when it was young
now green and wise like a freemason's handshake
that gets the cow milked somehow, hook and crook
or left behind, there's still a churchbell in the sky.
Eating our döner kebab we shuffle up the brick walk
to the holy house of everybody. A man smiles.

31 July 2000
Hannover

Rights more shall shiver in the morning of the law
till we prove death just wrong to do and know it
beyond the comfortable fantasies of Dr Guillotin
our backwoods Robespierres with trust funds

We need the law to come to noon, light
sweet on everyone, minimize shadows,
free victimless criminals, put
murderers to work — a chance of being useful

Free every mummy from compulsory eternity.

31 July 2000
Hannover

EXPO 2000

I find in my notebook a butterfly wing
from a sky very far from here
a silken message from the Arabian Nights
in this huge drab scary environment
too big too empty too crowded too far
and though the crowds never come
you have to wait on line for everything —
which is the operative paradox
that makes this World's Fair close to art:
unpopular, inaccessible and grand.

31 July 2000
Hannover

GOETHESTRASSE, IN THE TURKISH RESTAURANT

Tasting the blue sky
Is a good job for a greedy person.
I volunteer —
There's a lot of good eating on a sky.

31 July 2000
Hannover

MEDICINAL REFLECTIONS

Eat glass whole.
Don't chew it
and whatever you do
don't swallow.

Just eat plate glass windows
on hairdressers showing mod cuts on models named Jutta
or in front of local supermarkets
offering large economy boxes of laundry soap.

Sometimes in milder seizures
it's enough to eat a car's windshield.
Never a bookshop's — too distracting,
takes too long, all those particulars.
Banks windows are best, empty as the moon.

31 July 2000
Hannover

By my terrace a dead tree
or maybe not dead
it looks healthy in fact
with buds and twigs
but it's the end of July
and there are no leaves on it

on a grey day it gives
a comforting winter feel
to the sky I see through it
while all the other trees
still think it's summer.

31 July 2000
Hannover

ACTS OF FAITH

Act of Faith

To wait for things
and by waiting
 make them

2.

beautiful when they come.
Upright like a flute
tragic like that woman's hair
tied back too tight

pulling her eyes back from her book

3.

over there
where my eyes also fall
fail,

princely company of things seen.

Act of Hope

Any tiled wall — as at Kröpcke, city center,
small tesserae — is a map
of course but what

map, a fold up cosmos
a portfolio to keep
your world in

guess by guess

some blue Columbus puffing out his sails.

Act of Love

Morph into me.
That's what lovers
Unspeakably require.

When love is gone
what's left is resemblance

31 July 2000
Hannover
(on the S-Bahn # 16 to Expo-Ost)

Now the train's a trolley car
a train in light, grinds
around the corner
looks like Brookline auf der Leine,
Freudallee, looks like Nassau Boulevard in Garden City
people getting on and off
talking funny.

I can speak
asphalt green light tree
almost perfectly. But this language
stuff, Kerstingstraße,
that's asking a whole lot.

31 July 2000
Hannover/Expo