

9-2000

sepB2000

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Guess me again  
I am grass  
Comber from no China

Sea is just a pronoun that you said  
Built of leather  
As I would bring hard to the backside of the Sun

So that she flees into space and lets us see  
At last what all that light  
Is meant to hide

Even if it finally turns out to be  
Only a madman like me  
Scribbling on a broken piece of slate.

6 September 2000

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I leave my money to the Velcro plant  
To propagate a nobler sacrament  
Marriage firm to hold and easy sundered

I leave my money to the frightened ants  
Who trace new alphabets  
As they scurry single-minded appetites.

6 September 2000

## HERACLITUS

But can I measure it  
The lunacy of stars  
The disasters of the moon

*Each thing dies each other's life*  
My friend said, scuffing  
His Birkenstocks through wet sand,  
And he said *if ocean could make us clean*  
*Eels would be angels*

Ah, he was a man named for a woman,  
A dog in the pay of owls

Sleep, master, sleep  
The sun comes soon enough  
Too soon, too soon  
And you shall have no shoes

Or new shoes was it  
To meet the inarticulate light?

6 September 2000

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prayer as rhizome  
stolon seeking one  
pointed in the dark dark  
earth of mind  
to mean

through that grit we call our thinking  
guided one day by desire  
next by nothing  
the image of the stare of affairs  
we conspire with all life to utter  
outward in the actual

o make this woman safe from grief

or prayer is mycelium  
ever and variously probing  
through the dark mind  
to find an intersection to make real  
what the will or tender wish intends

that this house rebuff the wind  
this well spill forever  
and her heart come home.

6 September 2000

## Day books

She was stiff with shadow but  
She traveled  
In a violin

The passengers were always outside the vessel  
Only the source of light  
Was in its cabin fast asleep

The journey never  
But frequently  
If ever

Shadow stiff along her skin  
I went home disappointed  
With myself again

I never say it  
As often as I say it  
Never speak I talk so much

I wanted to go right now  
And say it to her  
But my collar was tight the clock ticked

Why was I afraid  
It's all just weather  
These are my students my ashen leaves

Choosing to stay with me  
Because the wind and all that wine  
The local blue of space

6 September 2000

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how near we are to far  
off kilter like a star  
bathed in a southern ocean

last night the Pleiades  
so bright the cold  
sky but lost

in water  
multiplied divided  
banausic  
the handwork of light

we bathe in dust  
of light  
like sparrows emigrants

crossing vast oceans  
on our trivial wings  
or do we dream

them the whole thing  
here  
into our trees?

7 September 2000

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Wilderness death  
The last of me  
The first of who

7 September 2000



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it is not easy  
to be orient

lodge a motion  
against the dark

again and again  
secretly

loving that secret  
enemy.

7 September 2000

## SLEEPING WITH CHARLOTTE

semaphores of repose  
her arms swung  
hourslow under the duvet  
till day comes having understood  
not the message but the messenger

7 September 2000

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Analyzing the story  
took at last  
the story away. Left me  
alone, with the telephone  
still in my hand.

Some like me, some not.  
A few love, a few loathe.  
I am no different  
(I thought I was)  
from any and every  
(I thought I was)

object of emotional incidence.  
I have done terrible things  
as if I had to risk everything  
to have anything,

or this one thing,  
my difference

and following every impulse to its end  
into the shadows past the Kotbusser Tor station

to say the first thing that comes into my mouth  
without meaning it and without refuting it

just saying what the heart let  
itself catch from what spilled  
from the mouth

neither lie nor truth.  
A *saying*. Every word's  
a quiet violence against what is the case.

8 September 2000

## HORTEN

The word she wrote  
to show me where it is  
leads me to nothing

just her hand  
writing it. I see her  
hand, the word

forgets to focus  
on the paper  
the ink is blue

the hands of course  
are pale mediaeval  
here, hers. Even

her arm is vague  
and I cant remember  
was she the vivacious

concierge or the teller  
in the Kaufhof  
but her hand goes on

writing its unreadable word.

9 September 2000

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The pomposity of music sometimes  
When it is only what we take care of  
That cares for us in turn. A man  
Past infancy can be nourished  
Exclusively by his enthusiasms,  
I'm not talking about philately  
Though some envelopes still bear pretty stamps.  
The trouble with e-mail is no mucilage.

9 September 2000  
— 11 September 2000

## THE EVENT

Who are we all who all together  
Admire the absences we make between us  
Spilling shadow from our little hands?  
Who else could drink from such a shallow fountain?

9 September 2000

## RHYME

*for Illiana, Terence, Margaret*

1.  
Terence rhymed to make the matter plain —  
Rhyme *remembers*, so makes us bear in mind  
Everything that came before

So we can order the history of things  
Into that meaningful midnight calm  
When we look across the lawn

(The table, napery, dance floor, candles,  
Years and years) and say *We love you* or *She*  
*Taught me music.*

2.  
I think I don't much like to rhyme  
Because I'm on the lam from remembering,  
Like guilty Tannhäuser

Slouching along, hiding from the stars.  
So many things I'm not so glad I did  
Or saw or heard or meant or got.

And then something stands out like last night —  
*Pracht im Nebel* I thought when I saw the torches  
Guiding our cars through the meadow fog

And that I want always to remember,  
The splendid house a woman opened  
And the friends rushed in to kiss a friend

With all the tender devious gifts  
Of music, poetry and truffles, truffles  
While the crouchbacked moon looked on

Amazed at all the giving and forgiving.

10 September 2000



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I think poets are spectacular cripples  
Sprawled noisily over the living room,  
Sulking over magazines under lampshades  
Looking up with their weird eyes  
Full of neither venom nor compassion,  
Wary waiting glance at all these uncles and aunts  
Cavorting at the party. And it all  
Is a party for these uninvited guests,  
their mitts full of canapés and wine.  
A poet is all waiting and wanting and waiting  
Till every now and then a word  
Bumps into a word and the light goes on  
And the poet stops even pretending  
To be paying attention to your body or your soul.

10 September 2000

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Name it.

It will be

You.

Yours.

Can't fail.

It's like a deck

With 52 aces

How could you

Lose.

Karma

Is how. It

Could be terrible,

Be yours.

Or some

Body else's worse

Even than yours

And you would win.

For a while.

But then.

10 September 2000

## Morpheus

Who is Morpheus?

— Leonard Schwartz

mOrpheus is the dead Orpheus

what is said of the latter  
is the case of the former  
after slaying

I mean after being slain

He who slays us every night  
Or as we say about some girl  
Who charms us out of our self  
Possession, we fall for her, we say  
She slays me,

And in every case  
It is Orpheus who is slain,

Becomes the God  
Of having fallen asleep and being in a dream  
And dreaming about all the beauty of the world  
The battlements of glory and the gold rivers of Lydia

All in a dream

Now when they asked Who  
slew Orphée?

The answer came: The bacchantes, the bassarids, the girls.  
And we know  
Who they were.

Who they are  
Right now

I could name them

The ones  
Who keep you awake all night long

Until the dreamer in you  
Kills the poet  
And you fall on sleep

And meet her there  
I will not name her

Meet her  
Leaving the robe of your office behind you  
Knowing no function  
But to know her and embrace her

Like the dark brown almost god you are

Down there in the doldrums  
Between sleep and dreaming

So Morpheus is the god of wisdom  
after the siege of that intense dispersion  
he calls the other sex

to him and from him, the cast  
grains of sand

hear me, the sAnd-man sleeps.

10 September 2000

## CRYPTANALYSIS

After a certain point one day, drinking coffee in a coffee house and listening to a radio on the shelf behind the espresso machine playing a four-handed late piano andante of Mozart, he realized that Mozart was the only answer. Not that Mozart himself knew the answer — with such a genius, how could one be sure, but probably not. But Mozart was the answer. It came to him in one simple moment: take all the compositions Mozart ever wrote, and arrange them in strict order of their composition.

If the exact date was unknown, leave it aside for the moment.

Take the resultant opus, and play it, in order, listening first generally, then later carefully. Months it would take to do it consciously. Listen and note what the music said.

Study every parameter. Graph every pitch, every accidental, every dynamic marking, every variety of note, every expressive mark. Read in order the verbal text that accompanied cantata, motet, song, opera.

Graph after graph, statement after statement..

Take what you have heard and what you have before you as the encryption of a single text.

Decipher it.

From the gaps in the resultant clear text you will know where to fit in the many compositions without firm date, once these compositions have themselves been decoded according to the same cipher discovered in the whole corpus of sound.

And he determined to devote his life to this decipherment. A hidden life it would have to be, dedicated to this great mystery, well-hidden in plain sight for two hundred years. No better code than the code that no one thinks is a code, he reflected. And he reflected on the life that would be his, all the work, copying, listening, playing, transcribing unrecorded pieces in some form he could play on his mother's old piano left to him after his parents died together in a plane crash on a hillside in Sardinia he had never seen. A small piano. A whole life he would spend. The thought of it exalted him and wearied him. He stared into his empty cup and wondered what would become of him. O my dear God, he thought.

11 September 2000

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We don't ask much except the father.  
I mean the son. I should say the holy  
Ghost. We ask the whole  
To be everything, and to compress  
Itself into what we sense we need —  
Such senses profligate of sense!

11 September 2000

## FACULTY DINING ROOM

Piranhas and pimentos and palaver.  
And in the faculty uni-gendered bathroom  
A dead fly has lain supine and stiff  
On the same time three days now  
And no resurrection. I sound  
Mad at somebody. It must be me.

11 September 2000



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*(after a line by Robert Duncan)*

Arietta with leaves  
I almost hear

Speakable music  
For change sake

For-othering  
Far mothering

Despot time  
That will not take

Yes for an answer.

11 September 2000

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Instances of conversational perfidy  
As when your host reveals himself to be  
The ex-boyfriend of your ex-girlfriend  
And you are suddenly mired unwelcome  
In affinity, yuck, why do we ever  
Touch one another? Don't we know  
Identity is more catching than disease?  
And still you have to drink his wine  
And tell him your imported jokes  
And flirt with his appalling latest wife.

11 September 2000

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I'm sitting at a table eating my lunch.  
There is no one nearby I want to talk to,  
Not even anybody who wants to talk to me.  
I want to be reading, not the mail, a book.  
I want to be reading a book. But I am bookless  
And empty handed, nothing but me  
And the food and the light of observation.  
Nothing ever stops. So I must compose  
Myself textlessly and in public  
In contemplation of the ever-emerging  
Narrative that goes by. I get to guess  
The secret dungeons each one goes home to  
Every night and what arcane disciplines  
They practice there with string and steel  
And skin and memory and sleep.  
I don't think these unconscious pontiffs  
Ever grasp what they're doing. Aimless  
Gestures fulfill ancient rituals.  
Vagrant onanisms populate the earth.  
They pass me by now in their bodies  
On their way to the lost religion of their lives  
That creates the earth. This actual one  
They make me walk on tomorrow  
When the dark again turns into now.

11 September 2000

*(What I heard them say to me as I fell asleep:)*

We've come to take you home  
Where the fire brightens the intelligent chamber  
And it never stops raining, you love rain,

Lake and mountain, river and sea,  
And the wind runs naked through the old wood,  
Old rooms, old books

And women stand by water waiting for you to dry them  
For you to lick with hungry reverence  
The sacrament of their skin.

11 September 2000