

9-2000

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Seize a leaf  
    a season  
or a red car

identify absence

these lingering decisions  
feel like lingerie

silky pretty vaguely shameful but you smile

decide me, the arrow said,  
decide me, the whirlpool smiled

it all is being caught in a machine  
where everything has its role

except for me.  
And that's my part.

25 October 2000

---

there are secants meant to cut cut  
is something done to something  
something endures a difference and

someone opens a wall a door does  
into a room the room is space  
something happened to a small

is it number is it something else  
again there are things that happen  
to no one that is what it really means

26 October 2000

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there are se cants meant to cut cut  
is some thing done to some thing  
some thing en duces a dif ference and

some one o pens a wall a door does  
in to a room the room is space  
some thing hap pened to a small

is it num ber is it some thing else  
again there are things that hap pen  
to no one that is what it real ly means

26 October 2000

**(sensing separations)**

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*(after Stephen Vincent Benet's poem about Duke  
Robert of Normandy)*

this place we inhabit  
its rules so deep in it in us  
how did it come  
to be only what it is?

a Duke was riding  
dark into seafoam  
the maiden no maiden  
longer held his

leg with her strong arms  
wrapped her cheek  
to his thighs to enquire  
from the immense

power of the weak  
what his will would be  
on her and what would he  
he wanted her so had

to give her to a thane  
of his of some sort a sly

leperish ruined fellow  
she was glad of

for the company only  
and then the sea came in  
and no more story  
they went inland into the mere

remembrance of a glory  
felt like wet clothes  
felt like scratchy linen  
on her lip it's over

it's over forever the minute  
we begin living again  
the answer is awful  
her beauty continues

to disturb this disturbance  
is existence isn't it  
the story told beauty  
ruins us for life beauty

ruins us for living.

26 October 2000

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there are sea chants meant to cut hear  
is something done to something  
some thing acquires a distance and

someone opens a waltz a door goes  
into a room the warm is speak  
some thing had opened to a lull

is it numb or is it something bare  
against them who are thinking hips and  
knees to no one, that is what it means?

26 October 2000

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Decisively. Anew. A piece  
of paper. Touch typing.  
Almond horn. Close  
but not enough. Subways,

subways. German city, sun.  
Adhesive light. Sprinkle.  
Favors. Tower. A lease  
on premises. A dose of

career (Have you forgotten  
the river's name). On the line.  
Slot machine. Butyric  
a bad smell. Little by little.

Caprylic. Even a new newspaper  
Fades. (Can you imagine)  
Mercaptan melody. Old nose.  
*Intox* means propaganda.

It was a garden where everything  
was a surprise so nothing  
surprised. Orchestral interlude  
shaped like a dead apple tree.

27 October 2000

## LITERATURE

I wrote the whole *Iliad* with one tail feather  
Quill from a white goose one afternoon  
Between one breath and the next

No dust settled on my half-full  
Cup of wine a passing cloud made  
The still surface of look for a moment like the sea.

27 October

2000

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Of course some things will be forgotten.  
Wagon rutted so deep the canvas only

Could we whisk off and save in all that sinking  
One pale dirty flag. Whitecaps hurrying south

*Les moutons de mer* are yare today, nimble  
Energy so quick the scurrying light itself

By white wind transmitted no one jamming  
Weather. First bright wind of October

And here it is the end of it. The journey  
Where the man I was came to a simple stop.

New Hamburg. By the river.

October 2000

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But the flag I need has natural  
stars (if those things are  
that dazzle the night with promises)

slung on the heart's fat sky  
while slender white and scarlet maidens  
play horizontal nearby

striplings, stripelings, wonder of political  
foreplay, this land is  
nothing but foreplay.

Keep America Entertained.  
Entrained. Taking notes:  
Cabinet of curiosities, history of my obsessions,

Pink bruised by such attentions  
Here and anywhere, the stalwart reek  
Of diner coffee breaks the merely lyrical.

Salt and pepper. Wanderlust and toast,  
Sit smug as an egg in a carton  
Safeguarding your pale fragility,

Once there was a number blue as gold,  
An alchemist fleeing from a furnace

And a hawk overhead. O God

What more do I need but a hawk in high wind.

28 October 2000

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I checked again today.  
No one in the mirror.  
The federal dining room  
Lit by the sconces of absence.

28 October 2000

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I am wearing a new shirt today that my love gave me  
And looking in the mirror and seeing  
A clever little pocket on the sleeve  
I didn't know was there when I put it on.

I hope I get to use it before I die, and suddenly  
I am full of sadness thinking of all the subtle beautiful  
Things in the world small and not so small  
That may not get used before the one who might use them

Passes away. Night and hollowness and dust, macabre  
sleeve.

28 October 2000

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**TALK**

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There is a third animal reaching towards my head  
In between a you and a me a kind of Ottoman cavalry  
A kind of argosy from Nowhereland with wooden prows  
Cutting my nice ocean o for Christ's sake whose face  
Is the breasts of your figurehead, their sunken Wasa  
Humiliates the Swedes, but you in a canoe are shamed  
Enough trying to slip away wet-haunched from history.  
Loch Sheldrake. It never will. You can't get shut  
Of handball courts and holocaust, your lap quivers  
With foreboding, the Memorial Church a broken tooth  
And here comes the cavalry again, lowriders swoop  
To scoop up the treasure of your company, pommeled  
You ride across the north European plain, birches,  
Pomerania, the sea. If you want to call it that, dismal  
Shallows around Port Nothing with here and there a seal,  
Une phoque, tu sais, splashing up on gravel. Lord Woden,  
Give us another chance. Don't let it all be wrong  
All the time. They fling you down on the soft sand  
Lots of sun the mood is entertainment and you sleep.  
When you wake up you're me again. But in your dream  
You had been victim of a better war, orator, double agent,  
Recreational religion, politics, Teflon, snapdragon, snooze.  
The way stuff keeps coming back. Memorial, a thing  
Is a memorial of itself, a person a memorial of every  
Body else. That is the difference. You smell your hands

And something forces you to think about me.

30 October 2000

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Names you haven't heard in a while  
Golda Meir Yuri Andropov U Nu Trygve Lie

Places you haven't had letters from lately  
Obock Memel Tanganyika Baluchistan

Games you've forgotten how to play  
Chinese checkers euchre botticelli quoits

Things hard to find at the supermarket  
Bluing rennet pig's knuckles ink.

30 October 2000

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all audiences are captive  
audiences if you hear  
anything you are audience  
if you hear anything  
it will not let you go

this is the spell  
that musicians know  
bore them or thrill them  
there's no difference  
an audience is a pocket  
goes all the way down

to the sea you hold  
somebody to your hear  
and what do you hear  
all the music she ever  
heard and that's the truth  
that's the prison

31 October 2000

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[ON MEMORY]

Every memory is a lie we spend our lives trying to make true.

.....

You have no right  
To remember.

.....

So who is Mnemosyne  
Anyway?  
Muse's  
Mother surely  
but whose Daughter?

31 October 2000

## A WORD SHAPED LIKE A VIOLIN

That waited so long for him to open, bad door!  
That would not prompt his cold hand to turn its  
colder brass permission, an egg in his fingers,  
breakaway fuselage, open the fucking door,  
Tiffany glass lamp cowl discerned in the purple  
fucus of the Opal Coast, the fug in the room,  
frangipani sweated sweet the leis looped dry over  
damask fauteuil, he brought her sea weed and  
called her Queen. She wondered how long his  
avenues are or would streets be or the twist of  
pigeons in the pewter sky between the twin  
Italianate steeples of the yellow church, but he  
called them doves. Down there she could see  
pensioners taking their ease over the parterres of  
the municipal arboretum, more doves, please open  
the door, why should I, don't you just want to

touch me, the door was in him, the cellar he was she kept coming up from, trying to get out into the light, of course he was under her, she could feel him pressing up against her all the time, all the time, pressing against her, prodding in her, the way horses run, topaze sweat, the sun's last light, her primary virtue was constancy, her aspect intelligence, motive to make. Then his hands, the two of them, took hold, the brass now was warmer than his skin, a heron crouched in tall reeds, the way the head shrank down into the powerful pointy shoulders, waiting too for the right time, you could tell by color when it came, waiting for the sky's assent, they were all waiting, he proposed to love her for her assent.

31 October 2000

— 5 November 2000

