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BIRTHDAY

Things come around to being now.
A sort of being like a leap
a squirrel leap from not noticing
up into the heart of here she is,
a lawn full of her small
prancing. Cold wind and a gold finch
and we're here. A crow in fact sits
on a sapling too small to carry him.
And yet it does.

24 September 1993

GILGAMESH

Carpenters bothering the day
old Celtic word hammering
the side of the old hotel
a building is built to bother
the hour. Hammering the wind
bright already in cold trees.

The noise of them and their boring
etymologies holding wood together
the nails the claws the breath
making a fleeting fictive world
where our stories seem to be stable

a house is built of stories
every child knows that
imaginary permanence of vinyl siding
antique restoration old men
made young again (excuse me)
was the plant he lost at pond side
when the serpent sneaked it away
while he slept dreaming of a sky
full to the horizon with hurrying ducks.

24 September 1993

THE OTHER

Of course in dream the body
that embodies you in not
the body lies sleeping in the bed

sometimes early morning you still feel
those hips how they turn
to meet the burdens of your day

and those arms reaching down your arms.

25 September 1993

Mental excitement while eating a bagel:
names of philosophers
teeming to be listed.
Giles of Rome. Posidonius
whose writings are lost.
Chewing is remembering.
A hundred names of dead white men
stored in the temporo-mandibular joint.
Along with Dogon and Chuang Tse.

25 September 1993

If I keep hiding
eventually you'll find me

There is an energy
in the art of concealment
sends its light to you

And finally you read me right.

25 September 1993

Evening. Rain. Because
has a flavor all its own.
Does not explain. It makes
the rocks smell as if an animal
were passing close. Not explaining
but being there. With fur and sweat,
the glands, with going.

25 September 1993

vf-x#e

PASSPORT

Tousled set, a stunning use
of crystal empathy, to still
the patients in their beds
and make Sleep sleep

Deep down there then
there's no pain no light no pourparlers
this jabber we mistake for feelings,
none—

there is a swimless ocean and a sense
fixed clear on hurtless knowing.
When you know utterly you're here, you're there.

27 September 1993

REVULSIONS, 1

There are things worth measuring and then
there are feelings. Fix them
in pale vacuity, eye of a half-wit
full of secrets about his body
we do not have to know.
Do not put these in the museum.
They renew
themselves
in the tidal pool of feeling
every day fills new. The moon
and so on. Do not measure
her, she is the measurer.

28 September 1993

REVULSIONS, 2

Tonsured, a party on the beach
watching motor boats drag skiers.
Spinnakers far away on the blue day
and terns at the back of our necks
warning of something or other always.
There is so much to fear. No wonder
we have cut out hair and torn our clothes
and gaze at the waves as if they were enemies
suddenly defeated in red battle,
pitiable, forever receding, lovable
even, our last friends.

28 September 1993

THE FACTORY PLANET

The natives have always been restless,
it is a consequence of being born
and living there. The colonial administrators
(disguised as blue jays, squirrels, rivers, trees)
survey with satisfaction our ruined hours.
“Anxious as ever,” they write home,
“they tumble from agony to fun
in the twinkling of what they call an eye —
a round thing you can stop looking with
by lowering a little dusky pinkish thing
no bigger than a rat's placenta.
But they never can stop hearing, so
we use music to keep them on the go.”
And so the annual tally keeps increasing—
soul-hours of anxiety, anger, pride, resentment,
jealousy, lewd ignorance, despair and every
now and then a gem of pure desire, rare as remorse.

29 September 1993

Arriving in a big car
one thinks: I could have walked.
On foot one thinks:
I might have lived here
always. And at death
reflect: I never left.

29 September 1993

There is no morality.
There is only opportunity.

This means TV or Internet
or who *is* this sophomoric comedian
who signs my name to everything I think?

29 September 1993

So many little things are left to lurch
adequately through the noisy afternoon
past yellow hardhats revising the earth
the streets are full of chemicals, scholars
discuss Mahler

and Garance is gone, her velvet toque
worn only in a poem, so much noise outside
it is almost, Ted, as if we had remembered Heaven
and Heaven was Vienna,

Heaven was Paris, the quarter
where the Gypsies fled, the marsh the Templars claimed
and filled with with grails of their gold

Heaven was sky
again, where we all lived, Vainamoinen and Valmiki
and Hern with his feet up by the live-oak
remembering the last of all wars
and his dogs frisk by him
and those women, Garance among them, a shadow in shadows,
the curve of her voice calling, the shape of the sound of her
calling me through the crowded streets
following after,

for it was I who fled this time,
past the steamy Louisianas the rainswept Picardies

maybe I shouldnt tell the whole story,
follow her for yourself again

it must be a human lifetime ago that you followed her so well.

29 September 1993 14:58
for Ted Enslin,
remembering his *Forms*

I like the feel of the corduroy worn smooth above my knees and I don't know quite what to tell you after that, let that be confession of sensuality enough for one day, run your hands over the logroad of such fabrics till you wear them down and all irregularity is just a memory of before you and time goes on. None of this, of course, was deliberate. They say, have a cup of coffee with me, and I say yes, and we sit down and discuss the world into place a while until the shadows of the dracaena sift round the room and we both of us know, without saying anything, that the day is done for. We could turn it into the night easily (dinner, the movies, a concert) but we let it fall shadow-wise from our grasp. The cup is empty. My knees in fact right now are a little cold at the memory. Listen to Mahler---that might do it, one of his vast cosmic endings built on intimate, even sarcastic little afternoons. Something like a trumpet is busily changing my mind.

1993 15:05

29 September

And I would if I could have a little kingdom
like the Brontes knew, surveying it
piece by piece out of the dictionary
until by Name and Number it was tricked to stand
three dimensional and full of sheep,
blue clouds above it and a young boy whistling on his flute.

1993 16:36

29 September

Appalling clarities, woodlots on fire,
sore thumb, train track, alder
by long path, a shadow passage

leading to sunlight and bamboo. We build
by noticing. We speciate by senses.
Peace. A flag for all its beauty

makes a bad blanket. Over Soukhoumi
what emblems flutter? *An image
over an image, a few colors
escaping from light.* The war, also,

is fragmented, scatters beads of bad quicksilver
everywhere. Darnel seeds from cotton trains,
deer ticks wait for the fat of my calf.
Despondent travelers of a battered vocabulary!

30 September 1993

LIGHT MUSIC

Light music that a generation knew
when electric light was new, a light
was a kind of turn-on (we still say)
and a dance. We suddenly had

so many permissions. It gave us too
the dark, a darkness we could choose,
till it came to be the quick inside us.
Gershwin, Ravel, the inner moony madness

that men go crazy in the south of France
when all that thymey sun goes down
and we go with it into the endless Judgment
waiting always when we close our eyes.

30 September 1993
(listening to *Porgy & Bess*)