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THIS ART BY PRIVILEGE WOUNDED

This write'd act this perury
of paper by the acid mild
sky corrosive of this stable sand
when we began to underscore
momentary presences of gulls

I was sea people and I runed.
Wrote. Dwelt. Dealt
in Averroist principles and mauve
resemblances. Contusions
more delicate than sea-pinks
I am Madonna the alien
far fallen, I insist on being rain.

2.

Any forest dweller would understand me—
we have to protect ourselves from instances
hide from all words in a nest of them
far crowned or crossed around some dumb sound
summed all my years of fooling around with
cattlecars from the Pleiades.

We seem

in sense.

To this one hour come. Horn?
Barely a minute of my mine.

16 October 1992

AT THE THRONE OF THE DISTRIBUTOR

With such clever all your music
get something free for me — a sailor
saved from coconuts will do, any old cartoon
and something costly
like a wife with a winch.

16 October 1992

She stands at the lectern
and beside her a table
on the table a pitcher
and the pitcher made of glass

she stands and she talks
to me among others
she talks and she is married
she is married to the water

married to the water
in the core of all the water
in the water in the pitcher
she is married to the light

inside the water the water
is held forever in water
held in the heart of water
instead of a heart it has a wife.

2.

Silence
grows up
from the bottom
of the poem

grows and grows
until it reaches
suddenly the
boundary of the form.

16 October 1992

GOLDEN ARMENIA

Golden Armenia across the merely remembered
the actual — because the mountain never left you
and the fragrances of alphabet and ordinary arise—
the Lord of this World always envied you, Hittites.

Your water was too clear. Your monks too reclusive.
Your travellers too understanding of what they see. Venice
was one of you, and a cliff with dwellings eyed in it,
yea, dwellings for the dark business of being saints.

Once I found you midnight Watertown a car by chance
disabled neatly at a corner a woman getting out to lean
against the night while her lover was competent, she looked
up to Orion and I at the same star in the left leg, Rigel,

and our faces were bathed in the same light suddenly
I knew the way you know, and the bones of your face
looked solid, beautiful, disappointed, almost patient
against the sky over our impossibly small world

and I knew what it means to have a country you are always
coming from.

17 October 1992

David forbidden by the Lord to take a census of his people

is the Jew prohibited from *writing down* the word,
the word which, written,
becomes scripture.

History is the sad story of the passing of the Word into a book.

Description becomes prescription. Song becomes stone.

17 October 1992

EQVVS OCTOBER

There is cause here
of what will grow
out of pain

buzz of the persuasive piazza
edge of town talk
where the Horse's body
still standing on all fours
after the sword
with one quick authority
forgets the head

into the runner's basket
and the bloody stump of tail
grasped is trotted with
by another, naked,
also human male all
through the habits of the town
the two bare young ones run
sprinkling every woman to conceive

then It falls
and there is burning
of the holied animal
our *epons saker* (sounds like
in the old language)

when It falls this happens:
clatter of Its dead feet
slip hard sideways
over the cobbles crash
of its belly, flank against the stone
and the dust goes up
and over the soon silence
you hear still not far away receding
through the shouting of flies the quick
slapping of the bloodrunners' bare feet

and the maiden matron squeals of the sprinkled,
the blood-asperged mothermen of Rome.

Exhibit A:

In dust lying the spatter-woven black now
reddened
sinewy twist of the Horse's tail its
business finished lying on the altarstone waiting
for the moment in the fire that is its own

Every one has been sprinkled
Every one has been touched

The women bore this also
Now the city owns every one.

Exhibit B:

It was a handle on what would happen.
The head having bled all it had to
sits on a post or a paling
looking down and looking crazy
looking down on the braves and squaws of
Rome
howl up at it

like people who sit up all night reading novels
and are shattered at dawn in the cafes
that stink with the keen resonance of Lavazza
and workers with mustaches of coffee crema
shuffle in blue pants up the street

indifferent to the vast burst of genetic energy

that has made them and all folk of the City
carriers of a year's worth of valor

to go on.
To make the child up out of blood.
To get born in the street.

18 October 1992

FOR JERRY ROTHENBERG SINGING

All night I have been hearing him sing the 13th Horse Song
but he said "You will hear no Navaho music here" so where

is this *here* in my head where I hear native born of the ear
the regathering delicate howl-work of his upsweep weeping

not a horse singing and not a song about horses or a
what is a song singing anyway or I mean what a voice knows

so-ing and so-ing and saying so and you never hear the words
a word is what gets lost in the hearing

18 October 1992

That there's
always something

usual a

hesitation
(where it looks like

supposed to be a sun
/slash/ rain

/slash/ mountains on
top of water

a glyph a forgetting

's called "North River"
gates the west

one thing over another
(Ich gehe nun und schließe ihn)

igneous, comes from fire
aqueous, comes from even more mysterious

a molecule lost in the space I
(still pronounced eyes).

18 October 1992
for Dennis & Barbara Tedlock

(FROM THE CHIMERES)

Twelfth House where I
keep my Love my kraal
with no moon in it and Iron
Star rusting spike driv'n
into the slabwood fence the red
of hemlock underbark also
deducing that Color

the red-polled Pecker of the Wood you own
greywhitewing'd into the rust of your brush

deer stand around at the end of the drive
whiskered cat and squirrels chiding
raining through mist past branchwork
a negative space looped down from the moon
where not-thing sees us, cool eye of weather
calls my name again this atmosphere
where I keep my Love my frantic yesses
turbid in the Venetian palaces of moles.

18 October 1992

carrying around for days an outmoded french adventure novel —set in Iceland — and a cheap pamphlet promising Welsh Made Easy — without time to read either — carrying them upstairs and down to bed and table — to town and work — because these are the signs of *private time* — the clock that has hands but no feet no wings — signs these books are of what is own — not owned — not owned as he is owned by time — free by virtue of being unwanted — he does not have to tell about what he reads — only to read — is that selfish only? — signs these books are of what is almost his own — signs-manual that one day he would be free to be — be in time as one is in a room — to sit or stand — to sit on the floor — to spit at the door — he smiled at his hands for being so bold — crows are that way at morning now — promising to eat the day — a whole day — hands carrying promises no book can keep.

18 October 1992

You hear the faint hum of the electric heater
you hear the mewling of a cat
you hear crows

there is nothing wrong with this picture
but it will be made of lies
by the time you read it.

18 October 1992

SIXTH BROOKLYN SONNET

I am a recovering mnemonic and all that ever happened
means to cure me of that flavor the spice I meant demeaned
every soup into the old grey sluiceway of despair
all her old names her ways imponderable to this day
for I was owl and a problem and I was night time
in the tiled bathroom of the public library I was a knight
in sepia shown upon the high distempered wall
erect evervigilant before the incomprehensibly beautiful
figure of someone's lady maybe even mine maybe the mind
is equal to all its instances o god I pray for that great equals
sometimes I had to stand in there cool to catch my breath
after the amazing beauty of the books the amazing weight
of meaning in the pages in the bodies of those women who
amazingly were in this same austere temple I entered
every day to worship the inter-subjective universe we wrote.

19 October 1992

WHY RICH MEN HATE WEATHER

Gather experience rather
like eglantine
on expensive *Alpen*
you never quite forget
were not blossoming
only the blue gentian
of the sky above your face

the flower everybody gets to share.

19 October 1992

Entering Providence as a Chinese city
after a four day train trip mostly spent asleep

though we did spend one evening in San Francisco
we later watched backwards speeded up on TV

even the episode with the owl. And we were home
in love again and all the problems had been solved

even the color of your hair.

20 October 1992 4:32 A.M.
Written from dream into waking.
Exact transcription.

ORGANISM SUNLIGHT

Brisk gulls
over the shopping mall

caroming off the light
it looks

will I ever
be a preacher

this one
the one the waterfowls understand

the one that Charlotte is?

21 October 1992

Deliver a miracle
to the moon
among
all your other memories
retain this:
glint of Hudson
under the Spry sign
when Japan
was very bad
but very far away

and you were here
the bad one
of the earth
your neighborhood
hated you your
hands were shadows

it was a fat
people cooked with
white without hope
no butter the sign
enormous red
what suns left
behind when they sank
into New Jersey
hiding from war.

21 October 1992

FOR CHARLOTTE ON OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY

It's just as well it's raining it's
just as well the window is full of gold
branches quietly rubbing their frequent hands
and that I wake up a little angry at politicians
in their porticoes and us out in the wet just world
where perceiving the foolish moves of others
doesn't make me any wiser and blue squirrels
are successful at the feeder but how many of them
individually will feed into another summer
and nothing lasts and so on and how interesting
is a squirrel at the best of times
considering how furtive we are and quick to abandon
the sources also of our nourishment
at the sign of a thunder in the sky

and from the terrifying seed we also flee.
It's just as well I don't feel cozy with the world
today with all its harangues and Sarajevos
blood and minarets and marketable history. How long
will we remember? It's just as well
we have no memory only mind only each other.
Sometimes we listen just enough to hear.
I've been looking at you while you sleep
I think you're at the sea coast now the wild grey orchestra

we try to dance to and your face is calm
in morning light knowing how little we are able

but also that we are everyone enough
for all qualities to linger in our waking
we city people and soon you come downstairs
to the first morning of our second cycle
as if we were astronomy so to be measured
when all it is is getting finer the dream
between us keener the honor
of all our edges and I never knew anyone like you.

21 October 1992

