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THE GREEN MAN

Too late for corn
the green man stands
indecisive at the rim
of the clearing — should he
seize her now or wait
till pumpkins get smashed
by yammering yokels
his fierce religion
masked by mere revelry
townsfolk at play
and other nightmares
that scare the poor owls
in what should be their
own night?

    He waits
for the maiden. He has
been waiting for centuries
for the right one.
Is that you? he asks,
his voice froggy with green,
but each one smiles or frowns
or runs away. He knows
the one he means
comes silently to his arms
expressionless as he,
just part of what goes on.
His green god will send
him strength enough to
take her after all these years.
Autumn is his special music,
he strips the leaves off
and leaves the needles on—
two kinds of trees, two
kinds of mortals, and he
between them, waiting
his hour. Soon the dead
come to greet him, brother,
at their special midnight
for they are waiting too.

20 October 2014
WELCOMING SABBATH

1.
We fill in
the spaces later
when the wind blows from the south
and the flag on the bridge stands straight out
and one county touches another
and I am between.
I have lived for the names of things,
kingdoms, genera, directions,
times of day. The gloaming now.
The west country. The marches.

2.
They were waiting for me
to fill. My eyes
were alien instruments,
theirs, asometimes my hands.
Nomina numina.
The feel of a thing—
how granite from marble,
pine from ash
and the smell of apple wood
burning on an October evening.
No sense goes lost.
Every one of my kind  
(and that means you)  
is an encyclopedia of experiences.  
And our legs are stored  
with every place we’ve walked.

3.  
But it was names that told us where to go  
and how to feel once we got there.  
Only rarely does a place explain itself  
— Topanga Canyon, Clermont, Cuttyhunk—  
and then it grasps you by the mind.  
You have to lie to find your way home.

4.  
I explained too much.  
All you needed  
was for me to say  
Come, beloved,  
let’s welcome  
the name of the Sabbath,  
the Seventh Woman,  
every seventh word  
will be our nesting place,  
all cleverness will pass away
and we’ll rest together
almost touching
in the orchard of named things
where each curse is a blessing
and the ripe fruit does not always
shrink from the hand.

5.
For the Sabbath
is not just of days.
It is her presence
now and then
where a whole number
between six and seven
hides, and that is she
and another with her
on the other side
of numbers, and that
could be me. She hides
between the bird
and the sky, between
any number and the next,
hides between letters
of a name. All spaces
spell her, and the shadows
are her favored house.
6.
In a certain way of saying it
Come means Go.
That is where she hides.
Come, let us welcome the bride.
Go, open the door for her.
We in our feeble know-how,
we are the groom. Long
ago she wrote our names
on birch bark with peach gum,
wrote them down clear
and waits all these years
for us to learn to read.
Her runes are everywhere.
When the breeze comes up
you'll swear it is her fingers
on your skin. False analysis.
Your skin is hers already.

Lost in feelings as if I were
no more but what I feel
I remember her, she saves me,
she is the Sabbath, the gap,
the living gap between
illusory realities. The Silence
which is all we know of the gods.
The silence of named things.

21 October 2014
Lascaux in the head the walls
of the cranium bedight with figuring
the beast the woman the hand
the weapon the hand the horn
the misery of blank spaces
where nothing lives, they all
are dead their images persist
I try to tell them I am interspecies
am human somewhat with a jag
of Neander Valley, a twist of Mars
back from the days when merchants
plied the planets and understood
all that we have forgotten, we try
to paint it on canvas, Turner, Picasso,
or the innocuous landscapes of Ilya
Repin which are really somewhere
else but they don’t believe me,
ye believe only their own differences,
named particulars that hem them in,
races, genders, religions, but I am
nameless, or my difference is. Wherefore
I pray to sit silent in their councils,
taking in what wisdom as I can find.
Where do I come from? Who is my home?

21 October 2014
You get used to the pain
to the not being there
anywhere ever again.
You get used to the silence
of that voice. Used
to the absence. But then
you hear it again, coming
it seems from inside you
but you’re not sure. That
very voice calling your name.

21 October 2014
Headache maybe or stranger still a headache with no pain, just blank where the ache should be. Study it. Write a book about it starting right here. The Painless Pain. The Empty Brain. The Sleepless Weariness. Good titles, they all will know what you mean, they have been here too, wherever this is, the empty place, the street that goes nowhere, quietly, not even to itself. All the houses are dark, the stores are closed. There is taste in your mouth you have tasted before, indifferent like everything else. In the old days you could sit on the stoop, just waiting for something to happen. Once long ago a bus came by, its wheel hit a peach pit, spat it hard at the porch, it left a dent where it landed. It could have been your eye. Maybe it was. That’s what it is, you still taste the peach. The pain is still gone. So long. You think, I must have left here long ago and not got anywhere yet.
Absurd I think it really is
the daytime dreams, the fidgeting
in the back of the mind where
memory starts getting ideas
as if we didn’t have enough
already to remember. Nothing there
but feelings, so we have to limn
(fine old word) images to suit
as if such things happened once
to me and made me what you
find. But do you find me? Or have I
hidden myself in all those images?

21 October 2014
Longing, the long luster
on the name of her,
queen or quickest dancer
leader among the Gauls
those forest fighters, gloom
be on their enemies
she roused to attack.
Pulchra Bellona fair
face of mental war
against the wrong idea,
using just the sword of art
she lifts in the ordinary
muscles of a hand—
the mind moves all.

22 October 2014
Those who wait for me above the earth and the ones below with rings on all their fingers and in those rings are jewels they will give to me and all I have to do is sing their songs for them my whole life long—garnets shaped like our hearts

22 October 2014
Rewards. Nothing given, everything gotten.
We are born.
Everything comes after.
The transaction lasts eighty years or so, the merchant lives forever.
And we belong at last to everything we see.

22 October 2014
LINLITHGOW

The volunteers
can do little
but stand around.
The fire burns itself out,
no harm done.

They speak some other
language here I fear,
made myself understood
with feet and hands.
I go. I touch. I see,

But people become young
when you look at them
too long. I alone
am left in the field,
some kind of weathered rock,
a stone with eyes.

22 October 2014
Tell him your pain
*for crying out loud*
we used to say, let
everyone hear
the situation, the doubt
hissing in the heart
of love that desire can
sometimes muffle.
Tell him pain is there,
measure it out for him
in pounds and miles,
tears and sleepless
dawns. Every person
thinks he is alone
in suffering. Remind him
you too are there,
right there, baffled as he is,
confusion is common,
confusion is pain.
Let him know you’re not
there forever but are
utterly here now.
Let him understand
now is his only chance,
now is the only time there is.
22 October 2014

= = = = =

But suppose there were genders as they were in our original planet before we mixed and grew intolerant and rendered seven genders by two all-purpose sexes as we thought—ah, efficiency, thou bane of beautiful!

Suppose the double suns still warmed us but not too much, and half a dozen moons moved respectful around the big Seventh, the Sabbath, one moon for each gender. And when we came we lost them too, one cold amphibian up there and one sun mad with flame and heat. Suppose we could be as we once were, suppose we could think those orbs into orbit again all round us, and we could play in all the permutations of our bliss and nobody gets hurt. Are we brave enough to think us back to peace? Angerless, warless, deep in earnest play.
22 October 2014

== == == ==

We will sleep together
in the wide bed called music
and each of us wake virgin again
purified by what defiled us.

22 October 2014
It slept me today

nor wake could yet
sparrow busy though
thoughts might

it sleeps me still.

2.
should I tell you
of all people the no
of all my yesses
the not yet of
all my always
the bleaks of all
my kind of gold?
no you must know
already being you.
Sometimes pain
and times never.
What’s happening
in the house of my head?

23 October 2014
MY URCHESTRA

Primal sounds
to unsuspicion you
and lull your weary reason—

nothing to understand!

This is the ur-chestra
playing right now in our head
between the mastoid and
the pineal it all boils ober,
listen to the grunting luba,
the plainting massoon,
the whining oboy making glad moan,

listen as the fabric of the world
tears itself to shreds
under the claws of the violince,

be consoled for the wound by the fatherly bello,
the feathery floops on high, the wee my-angle
winking at time itself, ting-teen ting-teen

and it all makes one mass,
high or low as souls require,
one mass, one sound, one baptism of noise
that wins your heart, yes, yours, you skeptical iPhone wielding snarkopod, even yours.

This sound, *digo*, is all there is.

Schwitters called it *Urlaut* and made it with his voice but voices are too recent, we humans just got here, we need the sounds that spoke before volcanos and plesiosaurs, before the earth detached itself from Her Majesty the Sun

and by a paradox (I decided) our hand-made instruments can be older than their maker, right now can blow the primal note! The tune that began us and not just us. For the stone is our uncle and the air our nursemaid, and every sound tells us what will come to pass

as they say, in time to come though what passing and coming have to do with it I cant guess
since everything happens right now.        23 October 2014

Variegation of textures
a man on a horse
riding slow a green field
in sight of a simple hill

Freedom waits
always across a border
you can barely make out
from here. But the horse
knows the way.
Ridden and rider
are strange to each other,
I know his sister,
he knows a man
I went to school with,
things like that
on and on. Cold
out here, we are
so far from home.

23 October 2014
There was a mean man
and he died.
Children rejoiced,
I never got over it,
I mourn him still.

23 October 2014