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READING EVERYTHING BEFORE IT'S WRITTEN

2.

That is morning work
the crows convey it
and the wind *in its belly*

a bus goes by like a child being born
the road is wet the ancient
name of the day is Rain.

Being good to everyone
or wet
trifling with waking
then suddenly.

2.

Begged there to be chances
clay to shape by hand
or with a pointed
stick once
without me
so sad the sleeping
hammering
in the woods
the noisy man who lives beneath the hill
dominant hand

is touch you fairly
ferly folk
a sleep of waking
hands up a trove long moss'd and greenish,
this was a book once
went back to stone.

3.
Now I can read it
I am here for that
complicit with ontology
I am
let no one wake—

I was the other you the mother,
our children were the agonists,
those actors on the stage
in front of the *skênê*, the shadow-wall,
they shouted out through their hard faces
what we had thought
to do, failed to do,

flash of lightning deep inside the house
love in the woods
the sea a fist pounding on the land.

4.

And there was more.
Men always going to work,
gash the bud
of the poppy
exudes sleep

of also mind,
who needs a flower?

A taste of dust
local,
from your fingernails
heals most of what you know.

5.

Celebration is the skeleton of knowledge,
there is no learning without
that kind of drunkenness
that comes
from greedy witnessing.

Witness.

I meant that too,
an organ or an ocean,
woman dancing to no music
or to such words perhaps

intended her to overhear.

**It is the constant miracle of
all the twenty thousand words
he used to say one simple thing.**

10 December 2014

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**The images the images
eye-stuff ear-stuff
stuck in the brain
deep in our mazy forevers**

**2.
break the lock
set the door free**

**light candles for the feast
give us the blessing
of an empty room.**

**3.
But that too is an image
walls around a ringing space
hear the darkness
singing in there**

**4.
In the old days
before people learned to believe
people just knew**

**the gods were not hard to find
the gods were at hand
the gods were in our hands.**

11 December 2014

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Night comes fast
a house never stops being built
snow-dight the trees
yew by window
the old words broke
my heart.

11 December 2014

THE MORTAL MANNER

**deer pick their way over the snow
to eat the corn we cast—
use words of one-breath only
to be at peace with sky and earth
no word should be longer than God.**

11 December 2014

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**These images we know
for sure, who they are
not what they mean.**

**Peace rests in trees—
you feel it there,
a vague thing, a mist,
the ghost of snow.**

11.XII.14

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**I don't know where things begin—
corn and beans, yes,
no native rice,
reindeer milk and what it says—**

**Descartes' thinking
brought him North
into Winterland the Fatal
to teach the Queen of it—**

**understand from this
there is some karma
comes from thought,
Empedocles on Etna,
Wittgenstein asleep in Anglia
o ile leap up to my God
this book I write
weighs me down to hell—**

the way you think is the way you go

**—in Drottningholm, December morn
the naked Queen slipped through his chamber
you see her plainly every time you die.**

11 December 2014

MANYNESS

1.

**Imagine manyness
as a single thing
a fruit**

**(you've seen
pictures of it, red,
curiously speciated,
held, proffered even,
on a virgin's hand,
or is it Eve, naked
exalted in simplicity,
displaying the cause?)**

**or a stone your wits
tell you is composed
of (conscious?) molecules
of this and that, live
minerals abound, *all
composites are impermanent,***

**at any moment manyness
will solidify, simplify,
and the stone disperse,
catch the stone's thinking
before it is gone, before
its members shiver
loose into freedom,**

*solve, coagula, the Prisoner's
Aria, Freiheit, die Freiheit!*

for every thing at all is sentient
hear the song it is always busy saying,

2.
Imagine manyness
as the scarlet quartet
you hear inside your ribs

*any number greater than one
is none*

imagine
the voluptuous uncertainty—

what *is* that fruit
who painted it, Memling,
Botticelli,
 who planted it
in the mind,

De Kooning,
the shape dissolved also
into color, only
the color lasts,
 hear me?

a box on the table
is full of Christmas oranges
and tangerines, from my sister

**in Florida, sly gifts
of the place itself,
we give each other where we are.**

**3.
In that we also
(who, breezy
pronoun, owl,
who?) are many,
being one, being
the same. Pronouns
are the numbers
of language, and like
numbers used
mostly to tell lies.
This you this I claims
to love, what
are you holding in your hand?**

**4.
After the chill is taken off the room
the numbers cease.
Or indistinct proliferate
into a common shade—
who knows what bees might
pass in and out of that shadow
between the rosebush and the garden wall?**

**But it is winter,
the sleep of number,
the billion snowflakes
drowsing on the parson's lawn.**

**Protestant America,
lily clutched in angry fist.**

**Imagine manyness
as an image you can change
spin a dial or old-time
Neapolitan carnival tombolas,
crank the wheel and
close your eyes before it stops.**

**5.
Number theory.
Trying my best.
For you. And you.**

**This pass will get you
in anywhere at all
for a thousand years.**

**After that the numbers
start again, nobody
counts more than one**

**or less than all.
We invented time
to store our numbers in.**

**6.
You there, with that
Chinese apple on your hand,
if you give me one ruby seed of it
I'll share the tiny thing with you
and we'll live a hundred years
together by a yellow river
under a sapphire heaven
in tune with what we do.**

**It is love. $2 = 1$.
All our bliss
comes from bad arithmetic.**

**Toss it to me, I can't catch.
Imagine manyness — gleaming
rubies scattering on the Persian rug.**

12 December 2014

HABITUS

**We came down here
and found bodies
we tried to put to use**

sent our wit into that plasm

but we were never flesh

**we put flesh on
lacking any other cloak
to shield us on this strange planet
we're still trying to understand**

**trying to understand this body
after all these centuries a mystery**

what are these parts for?

**Get from your father
a shiny silver dollar
hand it to a friend**

**stand four feet away
and let him make huge circles
armslength radii**

holding the coin in his fingertips

**so you, you follow the coin
with your eyes as it goes**

round and round, your eyes

somehow understand this place.

2.

**What we don't understand
how can I understand?**

**The shape of someone else
tells us, tells us true,
but doesn't tell us what to do—**

**the funny ticking sound inside my chest
the sharp pinprick in that lateral, why?**

**All sensations are just sensations
and then we die?**

**The cloak
gets snatched away,
the dirt under our toenails, our bare feet,
goes back to where it came from.**

**our dandruff still snow on the pillow,
on the shoulders of our winter coat
but we are gone.**

Are we just inhabitants? And why?

**Isn't there another way to be alive
without these amplitudes of meat
that rot away all too soon?
Are we back at the beginning then,
our local death the start of our real life?**

**Then why is it so beautiful
around here,
the forms of us wandering around**

**the yes, the eyes
all the colors of the eyes**

**the eyes the eyes
why are the eyelids so thin,
pass so much light when closed?**

**And why can't we close
our ears at all?**

**O the sockets and the joints
and why don't we bend forward at the knee**

and why does it hurt so much to be?

**12 December 2014
Shafer**

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1.

Blue sky day.
to the King over the water
to be orderly without the state

polyarchy, rule by some
rule by none—

to do two things at once
is to do neither

but then the Magician
spat into his palm
and a small rose bush
instantly blossomed there
and bees were in it
and one hummingbird.

2.

We drove for breakfast to a distant land
no one remembers where I came from
speaking some language of the western steppes
before we knew what a river is—

far away, flight of crows,
sun a shimmer on brief-fallen snow—

**we live along the lover's skin.
folds of love's body
the coves of paradise.**

**3.
Warm me, thy chambers cold
have chilled my blood,
north enough already and a tree
inside me shivers, the fruit
still ample here and there, rind
puckered by the wind.**

I need
***the other side of you* the card
read when the envelope fell open,
the way things vanish,
the way things stay.**

13 December 2014

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for Charlotte's photo

**To speak the water
light writes on it**

**and all its sound is
quietly imperative—**

**Listen! the senses
(eyes, ears) are all**

**made of water,
we build our house of it**

**and all I ever say
is what it tells me.**

13 December 2014