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novH2011

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= = = = =

Circular breathing
the one I meant to
all along the reed
snug in her lips

oboe or shawm
the gyaling's snarl is best
so many things to know
so many things you know

circular breathing takes
the world in and lets it
like reading breathing
say itself in the act

caught in the act of
taking in it sings

the double-reed the crystal whine

so many things you know

so many things
as children know
so many things you need to know to play.

27 November 2011

STEPS 6. THE RATTLE

The ache of every
clatters in the man's rattle

it says we're hurting here
come near

come share our pain

The ancestors take
deep breaths with our lungs
our breath

now they breathe in us
rattle clatter

dried beans in dry hollow gourd
you know how it's done
it's the same everywhere
every heart is hollow
pebbles in a shell
every heart knows how to holler
tree gum seals the shells
dry they are dry

they are the driest word
a hand can speak

the ancestors swim towards us
through an ocean of
what we think is air

it is not air we breathe
it is a very special gas or seeming

no animal inhales

we are alone in the earth

they swim towards us
to be dry again

to celebrate the ritual of silence we cherish
for them we are silent

it is so noisy being dead

they come to us to hear our silence
do you hear me
silence is a rattle

silence wakes the heart

the rattle calls them

calls to dry comfort

dry joy of being

being only one person at a time

joy of being one

you don't have to be special to know this

don't need a priest

to do this

a rattle rattles in anybody's hand

but to speak to them when they come

that is not easy

especially when it's for silence they come

silence of the rattle

the ancestors are very young

they have forgotten a lot

they count on you to remember

forgotten how to understand

things so easy for you
the way a knee bends
only one way
or a tongue curls in so wet a mouth

the ancestors are younger than you are
the ancestors are your children

they want to come again
sometimes you see their footprints in the mud
the snow
rattle of hail on a tin roof

they are coming now
you had to pick the gourd up
you had to shake it

you shook it

a rattle means silence

the rattle woke the dead
the cloud heard you
rain hurried to drown the dry sound out

you shook the rattle and they came
and they are here

now you are the one to whom they came

deal with them

take their silence into yours

and speak it

This is how the people learned to sing

(singing is learning how to leave space

learning to let the groin speak through the throat

to come to life again

singing is the ancestors in you

force of their silence

singing is turning the body inside out.)

27 November 2011

= = = = =

Street sign song
enough Sufi sparrow
sign enough a small
stroll nowhere
getting there.

27 November 2011

PATCHES

as little saying
as I like for once
as you please also
shirt shoulder recall
another kind of snow
leaning together us
stiffquietly mends.

27 November 2011

DELAWARE

the cost of rivers
bottom showing
dry afternoon
almost alone with
but the weather
knew her even better
narrowest pass.

27 November 2011

FARMER

where beasts were
and you named them for me
old knees over stile
some would live on
some slaughtered for winter
old knees no praying
no time for knowing
anywhere else.

27 November 2011

= = = = =

Looking out the window saves the world.

It exists in being seen—

watch how the Antarctic will change
as more people come to look at it

We create the world by seeing it
we create by witnessing

Is this an essay or a song?
Or could I be wrong?

I could but it can never be.

28 November 2011

STEPS (7)

To wake from
this life

like any other dream

the bicycle

red velvet like iron
inhibits the feel of things

are we surface only
is there in the midst
a meaningful plural of us

something like fish
uncountably many

we live by guesses

of course I hold her hand
of course I pray for her

hand of a ship
prayers of a sleeping man

Benefit Street? Downhill sight.
Old tall white pine tree?

some girl knows
what she knows makes her sail away

to stretch
a few words
around her hips

travel in the north country
speaking what I see he said

a pale house in the woods

the next morning
came like an osprey clutching a fish

dying but excited
to be part of the action

so few words
around her
even the slimmest hips

no rational objection

pry the song out of the stone
translate the Latin
back into Etruscan silence
their full lips pressed together

no word escapes a kiss

a humming sound
as of bees roused by warm November

nature but not natural
not what we mean

sometimes brightness hurts

sometimes you know too much to go on

shiver when his eye is on you
the eye on the church wall
and what does he do with his other eye
the one we never see

he sees her
she is his shore
a woman stepping up the sand of an island
is pure theology

the edge of someone going

is as much as we know of god

you've got to want it
the sea, the selvedge of desire
you call the Other

and keep giving human names too

this girl this boy

and sudden makes them there for you
approximations of alien energy

you suck them into your lifespace

you have come to the edge of him of her
you have come to the edge of being

burn the ash to diamond now
close your eyes now
both in and out are closed all blue now
the deer on the edge of the forest now
can't see you when you close your eyes now

and only the trees know how to listen.

28 November 2011

WARNING TO TRAVELERS

Carry the road with you next time
put your fingertip in her mouth
to help her say your name

when you've been completely pronounced
move on to the next fountain
typically a bare rock on the mountainside
from which clear water trickles down through moss
drink this and you're almost there.

What do people really mean by home?
Be sure you want to go there before you set out.

As one day a little boy
woke up and set out from his parents' house
trying to find his way home.

28 November 2011

STEPS (8)

Keep the rule
the grey scale
Peterboro riots
asking. Asking.

the blunders

history walking its dogs

freemen shudder
my god are trees

no one any more
aspires to color

neutrinos nourish us
massless intelligence
death approaching

dead is the solar measure

the sun sends both life and death

It is the day of the road
the guide comes
the guide makes light

the light gives life and kills

solar measure

approximate the blue maybes

squalor of a book

Masses for the soul of

you break this brick

tall wall

rise a hod-carrier

rise a man carrying a single stone

and in that stone

some letters are

language

our final flower.

29 November 2011

STEPS (9)

Become the because

life is a job of editing
a call from your master
rebel rebound

off usura's track
liberal plenteous and dark

night nurture

now let The Cantos spend their song
for I have worshipped
thine interruptions
and called them *Form*,
Nietzsche comely

new structures
are the best gift
for we too were slaves in Ægypt
our DNA compelled us

to assume the likeness of clouds!
we dissipate by noon

rules of the house
from which we went forth

travelers and too sure
amend by autumn
dread Michigan winter
where Merlin raves

for he eats fallen apples
dines upon fungus and bitter acorns

he has made the winter
his special liberty
scorning in treachery of court

laugh at fidelity
all his money safe in his mouth

till some virtue hips so sleek undo him
and he pretends to banish
himself into what sustains him.

as if he vanished from us
but this is book stuff
and he did not

he is with us constantly
the man himself is gold with grief.

PISCINE

there's always something wrong
a truck comes by
the pool guy skims some scum
there's always more

the shadows of lewd swimmers
are trapped in the nice water
the blue is scandalous
plumbing clogged with human sin

he thinks, he wishes
he could be out in Sherwood Forest
swinging his big skimming net
capturing unnamed butterflies.

29 November 2011

= = = = =

Day to stay home reading Persian
day to be a storm cloud over the park

women walk around looking up at me
they wonder if I'm going to rain on them

but even readers of novels are merciful
they forgive the stories they wallow in

there's something about a kiss more like wine than wine
it makes you forget everybody is somebody else

ah if I could be that one and that one could be me
all the time like young hawks playing in heaven

sometimes the story forgives us too
like those women on vacation in Portugal

who sprawl on the black sand reading my poems
saying to each other That Kelly hasn't got a clue.

30 November 2011

= = = = =

Mostly we go forward
all these cars are late to work
listen to me studying the clouds again
they are te conscious clothing
of my beloved blue
who left me long ago
sometimes I can see her plain beyond the air.

30 November 2011

= = = = =

Nothing's happening out there.
No wars, no politics,
just internet and TV and local police.
Hints of destruction
whispered by the press,
warfare always somewhere else.
I will not listen to the world they sell me—
everything they tell you is a lie,
only the skin tells true.
There was no Vietnam. There is no Pakistan.

30 November 2011

SONATA

1.

But there's more to it
Myaskovsky's first piano sonata
and the cold wind
from the south, the south
in America is weird
we run the other
way when we can

2.

always music talking about itself
just like (mean you) weather
where the words flock
trying to say anything
worth your cold beautiful ears

3.

anything curvy is worth it
body like yours you said
defining her so now I'll know
I'll never know
she is the furthest away
of all the little planets
that swing around my sun
where fire sets fire on fire.

30 November 2011