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## VARIORUM

by several hands

(not with variations)

1.

Pessoa

with several mouths

didst speak

am I you, he, finally,

on the way, by name,

to something singular?

Or all the voices are me

it worries me to think?

2.

Abounding rabbits to my few fox—

gnash teeth quick feet

the word chased down?

Who am I when I speak?

3.

Who am I when I am still?

That keeps haunting me:

who is speaking.

Got to get my *Wer spricht?*

out in English. Do I?

Did I?

Authorship one more  
half broken mystery.

4.

To have a week to do a day's work

and conversely, nobody knows,

American manners,

it is time we avow

how little we know

among and beyond all that is known.

I did everything wrong and still it gets done.

28 October 2010

## **NOVENA : “The Diviner’s Child”**

*for B.M.*

All mothers know the future—  
trouble is, they know too many futures,  
each one sweatingly glitteringly real  
some with blood and some with coronets  
all lying in wait for the child to choose.  
But it is far Fate, that Other Mother,  
who chooses him from the end of time  
and draws him into the arms of what is real,  
bitter taste of this beautiful afternoon.

28 October 2010

## A MAP MOVING FAST

*for Sigrid Sandström*

A mark. A toad  
half under a leaf,  
an elm. An oak  
over other. The land  
tries to keep  
pace with the chart.  
Our rivals are the sky.  
Rivers are always blue  
though few are.  
Hills are concertinas.  
A map is whatever  
blows away from your hand.  
Religion. The sad theology  
of losing things.  
Follow the bird  
till it passes  
the edge of your seeing  
but you keep going  
in the direction it taught.  
Thought. Made. You know  
what's going to happen  
always but will you

let yourself know  
what you know.  
It's not a play  
but it ends, not a play  
but people talk.  
One by one the woman  
leaves the man  
till she comes back  
the man talks to god.  
Where such things are  
it is said to be real,  
all round it outside  
are the dense bushes  
of art. Burning bush  
poison ivy spicebush  
oleander. The girl  
smiles at you like the  
curtain coming down.  
But where did 'you'  
come from, this is about  
it, beyond the bushes,  
earth churned up by oxen  
you try to shake hands  
you squeeze, the squeeze  
affects the blood. You  
do something to both of you.  
A hole in the wall

with glass in it,  
your pretty aunt looks through  
and sees what you're thinking,  
the shame of thought,  
the weight of having  
something on your mind.  
Can this you of ours  
finally catch up with me?  
Farmer with no prairie  
and a trunk full of seed?  
Is it lawful, is it Bible,  
is your pale gingham dress  
the sheer of an angel's wing  
left barely fluttering  
to shield us from exaltation,  
from too much seeing?  
If we saw we would not linger  
here. Shut up, yes, we are angels  
undefined, glorious  
potentialities, mute songs,  
uneasy company, we are blue  
dark shadows in winter,  
color of *the opposite*,  
the sound of snow.  
For her, Sigrid in Sweden,  
north of the normal,  
she cracks the soft world

into angles of meaning  
blue over black I praise  
because she alone  
knows that colors are  
the opposite of color.

28 October 2010

published in J.J.Blickstein's magazine (?)



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Lily, not nearly  
but newly, a slope  
for her to slide  
down the wet light  
or to a need. Her white  
face well-known from a book  
(something about Solomon?)—  
to hold this famous flower  
firmly soft in hand  
and then open it up  
to the subtle investigations  
of the air all such  
creatures hold  
a love song forever in three acts.

29 October 2010

=====

I'm getting ready to get ready—  
I write with all the things  
you've given me, *vous*,  
*vous autres mes miens*,  
my own language you gave me  
but I need another to say so.  
Once I could have ye'd you  
and yitted you but now  
all those giving hands  
and loving arms are just one's—  
*e pluribus* you.

29 October 2010

## WATER HORSE

Where do they come from?  
Dream, I think, where the subway starts  
and carries me deeper into Brooklyn  
to my mother's house, I can't  
remember the phone number, can't  
remember my mother is dead,  
station after station, the polychrome  
Della Robbia moldings of fruit and flowers  
on the walls of every station different,  
old IRT what do they call it now,  
the names are all changed, the house is gone,  
but the horse keeps coming up from the lake  
tarn mere pool river from any water  
it clambers forth neighing the thunderous  
snort of its intelligence: When you hear me  
know that the world has changed.  
Everything is different. It isn't even raining.  
You can't ride on me but you can walk  
by my side, follow when I go fast.

29 October 2010

## URIEL'S MESSAGE READ

*(after Paradise Lost, Book 4)*

If we believed we would come down from heaven  
there would be sparrows waiting for us  
and glasses of diluted wine such as the Romans  
supped at breakfast with a little frustrulum  
dunked in it of stale bread, no staler  
than the night before whose bliss already  
evaporates off the bedsheets of the town  
flapping wings in windows by the dawn wind.

If we believed we would rise up from our pleasure  
and be God in heaven or as they said in my  
old neighborhood of the highest kind of life You  
could live like God in Odessa (the natives  
Masha tells me speak it with palatal d:  
Od-yessa, like ordinary Russian, not like Polish)  
and we would wake for breakfast every hour  
and dancing girls replete from dancing  
would come and saunter by and settle  
couch-wise on our prosperous divans. Yes!

Because we would live in the mind more strictly  
than Scots-Prussian Kant, more rational than Robespierre,

nimbler than Nijinsky, wordier than Will  
at his best (the Dream, Lear, Winter's Tale)  
and we would be human through it all, just us,  
red meat snug in auburn or in ivory skins,  
people, folk, our hearts out loud, our souls  
horny for evidence from the spirit world  
happy to make it all up for ourselves.

29 October 2010, Hopson

## DISCIPLE

The way decides  
the footsteps follow.

Could you believe her  
when she said that?

You remember a trickle  
of blood on her cheek  
twenty years younger  
and Mozart being played  
hard against the over-  
whelming orchestra.

But still there is a way  
and someone goes it.  
And someone's cheek  
is whole, as if only  
sunshine can wound it.

*Duco sequor*—leading, I follow.

If you believe that  
you'll believe anything.

Ashram. Shock treatments. McLean.

You must go to a very  
quiet place to be mad.

blood needs the pale  
cheek to say its tiny scream.

30 October 2010

## **HAUTE-MAGIE**

The Seal of Solomon  
shines in every window  
but who knows how  
to listen with his eyes?

30 October 2010



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Seed. Seed.

Sad to say  
another day  
all one.

The few left  
translucent amber  
now, leaves,  
leaves. Seed

hides, light say.  
A silent house  
noisy in the dark.  
Morning far.

30 October 2010

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Remember forward  
though the chorus  
the singer beside you  
sings through your throat.  
The louder the clearer  
you sing the deeper you're  
lost. All those passionate  
bodies thronging in you  
around you making one  
sound. O sometimes song  
can be only a betrayal.

30 October 2010

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I wish you were at the door  
now halfway between  
equalnight and sunstead  
the light stands still  
one hour in every tree.  
I look through it looking  
for you, the one only  
the light knows how to bring.

30 October 2010

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Woke to gunshots  
again this morning  
Sabbath chorale  
hunters by the river  
hail the new-risen  
light into which great  
water birds ascend,  
celebrate by killing them.

30 October 2010

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A smile  
like a rabbit's  
a laugh like an  
advertising man,  
now we know him  
he is politics  
bad breath in his mouth  
bad teeth and very sharp.

30 October 2010

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Would there be  
then it would say so  
luminous jockstrap  
beneath wizard's robe  
the light of Saturn  
refracted through Hecate—  
men mix their gods  
like cocktails  
but the gods laugh  
one by one. A bleak  
sound, an iron grate  
dragged over cement.  
Almost the end  
of ordinary.  
Owls cry.

30 October 2010