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A WAY IT IS

The pause is
where sometimes the
music is

or in the sky the
cloud is not continuous
so beauty comes

the way the blue
between does
blue silences

reading the eyes
tell breath to
stop and listen:

listen, the silence!

***

And then again.
Poetry is the science of discontinuity
braiding silences into words
to coax some music down
from where the brain hides it

images out of context
words out of silence.

And prose is a field of new-fallen snow.

***

How to hear
what is not there

and hum an air
that is not here.

And make the self-evident less so

until it breaks
open and shows

the magic hidden
in the obvious

only silence knows.
***

When the magician’s
fainted or asleep
his glorious assistant
still enchants the audience—

silence is the wizard
words the girl in crimson satin.

1 March 2012
I want to look through your glasses
drink from your paper cup
stroke the skin you’ve never seen
listen close to what you never said

I want my longitude to cross your latitude
I seem to want an ordinary human thing
you are a name that hides what I most desire.

1 March 2012
= = = = =

I turn a new month on the calendar
my scream of terror
hidden in the ripping of the page.

1. III. 12
= = = = =

I want to make sure they
think I’m someone else

someone they really understand
someone equipped with the same

ideas they have already,

an ignorant teacher, a friend.

1 March 2012
(for ORESTES)

ORESTES:

(we see everything he describes happening on the stage while his voice-over speaks)

I swear it was my sister’s voice
I heard above me and behind me,
I was kneeling in front of my mother,
my arms were clasped around her hips
pulled against me, my face
burrowed in her lap to find
the place where I was born
and still she said nothing, all
I could hear was my sister’s voice
saying Kill her Kill her I kept
hearing till I thought it was my voice and my meaning, it never was,
I never did, it was Elektra’s voice
kept saying it and then Elektra’s body I felt pressing against me,
she was leaning over me, I felt her shoving, stabbing, someone sobbed,
blood spilled down around my ears
my neck, the body I held so close
stiffened then suddenly went limp.
I still held on. The three of us
went tumbling to the ground,
sister on brother on mother, I never
heard my mother’s voice again.

1 March 2012
Two deer
in the snow outside my window
one looks at me
but both are browsing
two deer
tout dire
tell everything, say it
say it out loud
even if only the snow
is listening,
only the deer.

1 March 2012
Places named for bridges and for brooks
places named for what they contradict
places in trouble, wrens dart in
holes in house walls, coyotes prowl.

The syllables of disbelief come out of us
as the names of ancient gods forgotten: Chair.
Hammer. Cup. The holy ones of things made.
Animals were gods enough in their own world

and all creation dreams of beasts like fish
busy in the unseen unavailable beneath.
Thor’s hammer worn around the neck
became Christ’s cross—but that’s just history,

the last of our grammatical mistakes.
To think is to know but to know is not thinking.

2 March 2012
From the life of a stranger these strings. Of varying thicknesses, toned. The importunate hollows of the wooden things. Strange boxes aggressed by fingertips. Not me is the sound saying. Some else of a one trickles through tones. No one it ever knew, hence can well articulate. Knowledge is a kind of silence.

2 March 2012
DUTCHESS COUNTY DAYS

There are plenty of sheep around here
but their shepherds drive pick-up trucks
and the shepherdesses all wear jeans.

So it’s no feast for the lyric eyes but
maybe the cosmic innocence of sheep
makes something gentle in the folk around them

who maybe still fall in love a little more
than farmers and insurance men and hackers,
maybe the oily fleece left on shepherd hands

softens the pragmatic touch. Maybe somewhere
out back of their minds they still can hear
Theocritus’ earnest gentle lechery urge them

to look up from their sheep to one another
as sheep look up from their grazing
a moment of truth then get to work again.

3 March 2012
Escape the trough of meaning. Spin the word and follow it.
Kiss Mary. Kiss Martha. Go down in the basement and kiss Lazarus.

You are the word now, the only one left. It’s you against the silences and you love silence.

It has to be this way, that’s how words are. Obey yourself. Kiss Mary again.

3 March 2012
I wish I had something to say to you
this morning something to tell. All kinds
of things happen to me (people, I mean)
but that’s not news. But I want to talk to you
anyhow, here I am with nothing to say
but wanting to be in touch. Touch.
I saw a crow on a bare branch in mist
in snow. I share this morning crow with you.
We are friends, so we are supposed to live
at opposite ends of the earth, far from you
far from me so all the landscape between us
can fill with our friendliness. The sense
that everything matters, everything counts.
The silence we cherish is as they say pregnant.
Everything is born from it. And you know that
gooder than I do. That’s why I have nothing
to say but will never stop talking to you.

3 March 2012
That crow
it meant
so much

can’t say what
the mist the snow
the branch the

shape of eternity
with folded wings
inspecting time

it makes my mind
comfortable
to think about the crow

perched there
big on a small branch
first thing I saw

this morning
the first thing
I ever saw.

3 March 2012
[for ORESTES]

(Elektra rolls off the bodies, turns Orestes over and straddles him—he is cushioned on Klytaimnestra’s body. Elektra is breathing heavily, sense of orgasm or profound fulfillment.)

(Voices live now)

EL:
It’s done now, brother,
you don’t have to hide your eyes,
it’s only me,
your own flesh and blood.

OR:
You’re so much blood…
am I all blood too?

(Elektra jumps off him)

EL:
Go wash yourself,
you know where the sacred fountain is.
I’ll keep her blood on me,
it’s my blood too,
a loving inscription on my skin,
a love letter from my father.
[Orestes gets painfully to his feet and stumbles off.]

(Pylades has been watching all this, perched on a rock)

PYL:
What a magnificent woman you are!

(Elektra seems startled at seeing him there, knowing he was here all the while)

Pyl:
I've never seen such power,
I want to throw myself into you,
you're a fire I could live in

El:
And my brother bathes in water?
you should go and help him,
you're so close, he may need you.
I dont need you, I need no one.

PYL:
Need has nothing to do with us—
we are angels of desire, only love
could have brought you to this mess,
this horror on your hands,
the red scripture on your face—
El:
You desire me?

Pyl:
Of course I do.
I am sworn to love beauty and terror,
I have loved a leper and left my land,
I have watched a girl kill her mother
and all I feel is lust for her now, this minute.
Now-- you are as big as my desire!
You’re the first woman I could ever
say that to—so you must be mine.

3 March 2012
Conic section
of a shadow
a shaded moonbeam
breaking the branches
and once again
to be anywhere at all
is to be in the forest
is to be in moonlight

where the everlasting choristers of silence
are busy emptying your ears
and letting the shadows fall
on everything you think you know.

What could anyone know?
There are arguments on a drifting raft
lovers endlessly quarreling
who owns the river
who owns the dark

and who will give all this to me.
You don’t have to answer me or maybe no way you could
the poles outside my house are wet with melt the wires
sing by themselves and refuse to serve my messaging
because god damn it music won’t belong to anyone
and all the things I try to say vanish into music
and no one holds it in their ears long enough to
understand. I don’t want you to understand—you do
already, too much, you know all about me
and in all your silences I feel great Love’s judgment
bastilling me with solitude—I, who am never alone.
There is a rock cliff outside of Rosendale
and an old wooden railroad trestle people walk on
nowadays mildly breaking the law. I stand there
with my eyes closed more times than you could guess.
It is like being nowhere at all, quietly, at peace.

3 March 2012