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DELIVERANCE

And one day the silence came
all by itself and no leaf stirred
and no one summoned. Cars
still moved along, sleek steering wheels
still hypnotizing drivers into thinking
there were real places and they had to go
but no sounds led them. Thinking
makes no noise. Even the birds
shut up till springtime anyhow
and roadsigns stop creaking
in the wind. I miss those most
I thought (thinking makes no sound,
doesn’t do a thing) but love this first
opening of the curtain. Sound is darkness.
Now the light comes in I thought
and shows what everything is really thinking.
The smell of coffee, truck hosing heating oil.

22 December 2011
FETISHES

First day of winter
an eagle meets a sinner
two predators we are—
we believe in miracles
we prowl the sky and earth
for our occasions.
In grace to pounce.
The neutral kill.

2.
Alienists called them fetishes
with colonial aplomb
and use the word for anything
people use to get off—
ascension into the exalted space.
Were gods once, they and us,
and still the lover worships
the silken gown, the open lips.

22 December 2011
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Birds discern.
Men specify.

22.XII.11
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Stare at this white wall
until it speaks.

This is The Method.

Follow he grain of wood of wall of rock
followed long enough leads you to yourself

who else is there to find

a hawk on a little crabapple tree

and who spoke of finding?

23 December 2011
Because because
I was a boy

No one knew me
there are no pictures
of my ignorance
(not knowing, not known)

except my face now
trying not to remember

the word on the tip of my tongue.

23 December 2011
Fly on windowpane
winter
crawling up
towards the no way out.
An ache here and there,
a man.

23 December 2011
SEASONS

pass in a minute
in a mind

the music breaks

the snow is green
trees fall from heaven

it’s a movie trick
the ghost with big breasts

two trees from one root

we hurry through winter
a sea is waiting, warmish,
south of the world.

2.

According to Ptolemy
this region is ruled by Leo
where the lion bathes his paws
in the saltpans of the Camargue
to disinfect the claws of lust.
Or east to Nice, Nice is Italy,
La Nizza, where the cornices
of heaven crumble, men kill their dreams,
daughters seek their fathers,
everybody sad.

Nothing sadder
than sunshine. The sea
at midnight. This very night
dark of the moon
not a single ship in sight.

3.
Give me back the hope I pledged in you
o far country take off at least your clothes.

4.
To look failure in the teeth
and say you’re mine.
After the first love what then?
Shouldn’t we (like certain
prudent male insects) make
love then die right away
our work accomplished?
We have no work though,
we have only what we make up.
5.
I woke up thinking about Faust
then wrote down what I thought:

If i really were Faust, there’d be no Mephisto for me. I would go straight to the woman, to Margarethe, Gretchen. What does a sly, snide travelling salesman in red tights have to teach me that doubt has not long ago made me familiar with? Gretchen is herself my devil-instructor. The milky-thighed innocence of a young girl: that is Satan's gospel, and from her wide-eyed tremulous credulity i learn all the local secrets of cosmology. Doubt and credulity--these are the salt and sulfur to which the lustful mind brings its spermy mercury.

She is my teacher. I can learn from her because she knows nothing, and wills everything.

But by then I wasn’t sure.
Isn’t writing it down a species of doubt?

I think I meant a simpler thing:
I’d go to the girl to find out
because I sense that she alone
knows the one thing I need to know—
how can I even know what to ask for?
I lie beside her thinking
give me all you can
and here is all I am
and let my body ask her.
6.
But that’s another opera.
In the cold here world
nothing moves,
only the flecks and floaters in the eye,
a little jazz to speak the little light.

24 December 2011
CHRISTMAS

for Charlotte

Christians say that on this day
God became Man.
Everything changed in us,
our flesh was god flesh now
and day by day we take god in,
repeat the incarnation.

Everything changed.
And the words changed with their things—
God meant God and not man,
human meant human and not God
but suddenly one day, this day,
ye changed. One became the other.
Not just the nouns (those sacred
mysterious things, man, god)
changed but the verb too,
what can become mean if one
already existing complete entity
becomes an already existing other?

All the words changed us.
They call it the Mystery
of the Incarnation, there’s a pretty
little cathedral on Long Island
named for this theology.
All the words
are different now.

And that’s where we come in.
When God became human he took it
on himself to die, because men die,
to love, because humans love,
to laugh and sleep and wake
and walk in the country under trees
that do not always bear fruit.

Not always. God (why do we say He?)
God is She just as much, the Transcendent
has all our categories to transcend)
walks by the barren wood, the too-salty sea
in Palestine, the one called Dead,
lowest point on Earth’s surface—
where else could God come to
if he really wanted to come down to us,
come to where there is nothing lower?
And the rabbis used to say that men
don’t see G-d or angels any more
because we don’t walk with our eyes on the ground,
modestly, humbly. For God is there,
he came down from heaven as far as he could.
Where we are. To be us.

And the words changed, the meanings
opened up, a word could be a cave
and we could do down and visit
the interior of the earth, a word
could crack open and let us see the stars.

Anything goes. Where we come in
and study hard to know
the range of meaning of each word.
Because a word is incarnation too,
a word takes a long time, as it takes
my whole life to find you, to become
your husband.

To find out what that means.

And then I look at you, I study the casual beauty
you invest in every movement, how you dress
in simple splendor for each occasion, the slim
skirt for the bike, the velour dress you wore
tonight to go caroling (you see it mulberry,
I see it warm brown). It seems to me
that studying the incarnation means
studying each human person God put on,
this one you grace with lucid form,
the strict behavior of your habits,
the firmness of your heart and will—
so love makes a Christian of me still
to study the becoming-work of time,

how the world came up with you—
that’s the part of the story I have to understand.
And Christmas seems a good time to say so,

here, midnight mass all alone in Annandale,
the Buddha’s blessing takes us by surprise
again and again, to live so long and come
close and closer to the one
we must still be intended to be.
Without you I could never have become.

24 December 2011
SKY MINDS

First coming
blue instead
the sky minds

poltering us

what name what name
the grace to fall

to intercourse the moment
as a verb
incarnate noun

the sky minds

we are knives

knives in surgeon’s fingers
we live in mirrors
curious of faults

which one is mine
or name name
a horn or hammer
never
till the blue discover

pain over right eye
what is wrong

the sky minds

something changes
the shoppers pause
mid-money

they cry what names what name
don’t think about already gone

the sun the sun
like men run

no city s completely flat
always steps to count

the steps the steps

to hide your
goods in the sky
climb tall
the piled-up thing
you live in
every house a donjon keep

what are we saying when we say
wailing for me

what name
comes up the steps.

25 December 2011