1-2012

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the mist
around the sun
the fog of influence
softens the new year

A fog is a vast population
of my beautiful confusions—
for an hour all the local spirits
made visible, entitled
by chemistry
to know us, let
themselves be seen.

Particles of water and of air—
we see them only as a congregation
only by grace could
a water molecule, molecule
of that chariot we call air,
that gods us,
    come to speak
and we to hear
voice to voice *not as a stranger*
but a friend
met in the darkness
in another century
another road.

1 January 2012
A light fog like this one
is always over there.
I am actually in it
standing here
but its seeming opacity
thickens with distance.
I am surrounded by
what seems to be far away
in the trees, around the sunrise
already above the treetops
almost,

    there

where the fog is
is here.
In some such way
there is a part of here
and I of you.

1 January 2012
All years have ears
what do they tell?

Or take a cloud by the ear
then lick your hands—

I thought you loved me
but it was just the rain

you thought I meant it
but I really did

so if a year could start
one more time you could

hear it, a sort of red
as if my blood had

all dried up inside me
so I smiled and smiled.

2 January 2012
SONATINA

1.
She went by with her window open
a letter of the alphabet out of place
cold morning woman on her way to what work

2.
Gallantry of unspeaking not to disturb
the sunlit silence of the afterwake
plane overhead like your stomach rumbling

3.
Plenty of time for colors later
this hour is just about the long light
seeping through trees like escaping slaves.

2 January 2012
Without a chance no chance
we too have walked on water

with a boat between
or no boat maybe,
or not eyes
we have seen a bat at evening
brown caught between the light
and the dark. Or have been.

The gruff Aristotelian keeps
standing up from the common table
only the actual, he claims,
and hasn’t a clue as to how wide
the skirts of the actual
actually are
   at least he sees
God’s ankles, at least he
loves what he sees.

But we need to know
the urge that keeps men apart—
that is the science,
o distancers,
   we deep need.
And then impregnate the obvious
have children by it
and inhabit the landscape
    bossless, subtle,
almost secret

    like the kingfisher I saw
when I was naked on the rock, he
came down from heaven, seized
what lives in water and was gone.

We too
to be so,
taking hold
of being,

    being and being gone.

3 January 2012
MAGUS

wall sport, a being inside
inside the time that seems
to pass
   but being in it
all must upstream
as a policy of closing doors
around you and be still

Grammar helps
   hence magic
trips to eastern Germany, Sanskrit
letters on your briefcase,
cloth-bound books. Be cotton.
Sperm-soaked jute. A wall
tells all.

   You smell wise.
The seasons of the year
seduce. Read Proclus, Porphyry,
hide chemicals in huckleberry pie—
who knows what tree god fell from.
ergot, madness, green rot, cellophane.
I have a painting of it somewhere here.
Something in all this is you.

Stuff. The matter

of matter

with you in it

praying to the wall

“stand firm, opacity

but let me hear

rapping on it from the other side

the knuckles of the one I mean.”

3 January 2012
IN THE ATTIC

There are ways to be waiting
or storms in the attic.

No house I live in has an attic
ever. Fact. Or access to such space
as may hide up there
guessable from architecture,
pitch of roof, gap
between flat ceiling and sharp gable.
There but invisible, an inference
like heaven.

I want an attic
a high place with dust and room
full of senile things
that don’t remember me, souvenirs
from nowhere, silence.

I read about them in books
the steep staircase, almost a ladder,
creaking door, the strange stained light
greasy with spiderwebs,
love letters to you from
women you never knew.

The letters wrote themselves,
sly chemistry of ink and roses
set the paper on mild fire
that soon enough burned out
leaving meek blue words.
Words are ashes, dust,
disturbances.

Overhead
all day long though
as long as you live in a house.
A house has heard too much.

I suppose travelers and vagabonds
sleep rough for silence’s sake
out there in the wood and stars
where nothing talks.
Or they can’t hear.

4 January 2012
Workmen check each other’s work.
Stars inspect us. Grains of light
we read. This is aristocracy:
we are entitled only by paying close attention.

4 January 2012
The secret wife of a pronoun
is a verb, who cheats
on her her-or-hisband
with some noun,
a shifty out-of-town predicate
but with brown curls
who longs to touch.

4 January 2012
**STEPS (13) THE LEFT**

What could be left of the left
and isn’t the anyhow we are
left from some other was,

a world?

So what’s left is us, panoply,
north star, red flag,
pale cheeks,

    synthesizer
fried in a brownout,
pine tree, you.

Left
of center was a loft
downtown
to kiss in,
grow up
in the last
hour of the world
we called
comrades each other

music paid the rent
*nos jours, nos jours!*

and a bus packed with your own kind
glory!

Glory left over
from a world before the world

all the bright red Christians and Jews
same shiver in the same park

nothing is left of America

just enough to stretch your knees
or let your hair down
midnight moonlight Yosemite

left is a place you come back to

alack in the only mind

we turn away from the word we meant
the spasm comes after

a tree’s left a yew an arbor vitae
tree of life the deer came eating
tree of life is all a beast itself
the world before the world was here
before we learned to talk

or we are what is left
after they’d come down and eaten and gone.

5 January 2012
THE SEDUCTION

Here I would correlate the ocean

with the goings,

    the floor of that ever-beginning river

marked with passages not ours

seamounts unrivered canyons, abyssal plains, thermal vents
where sensible beings see by heat alone,

but how to link this ode

with human doings,

    humanus, a being

who walks on humus, the soil, a groundling, a Cæsar.

But the girl was patient, willing

to be led into the conversation—

you are my ally
I said and she
said I thought your ally
was a sea-map on the wall
wooden tiles on a Scrabble board
blue gas flame beneath the coffeepot
not me.
No I said it is as I said
you are my ally and my only,

don’t talk religion
    sit by the fire and be good to me,
be beyond me
    and we will last the winter.

How much needs even to be said—
that is our problem
come home with me now
there is so much I need to do to you
so much you need done

do to me?

    I mean tell you, tell you
nine foreign languages,  a hundred hard operas
a manuscript from Old Atlantis
needs two to read,

    and one beveled edge
on almandine, a garnet stone
that in the right hands
slices through darkness and shows
an utterly different kind of light.
The answer seems to be seduction.
Se ducere, to lead yourself
to yourself,
    to lead someone
all the way to his or her true self,
your own self,
    a self you can’t find all by yourself,
seduction, the word itself seduces,
you seduce me, you gibe me myself,
the only gift a human has to give.

Hence the rhapsodies of theologians
who sought to give a self to God,
give a self to Being itself,
    seduce the Lord
and make Being evident
to itself, today,
    Epiphany,
to show That self and by showing
show us our own?

    Ah religion, you business of the dark,
all smells and smoke and sounds and never a touch,
nothing so primitive
as my first language
and yours too, Marquise, yours too—
the talking skin.
Reach out and touch me
I am the only one who can find you,
I am the door of your only castle.

He said

and the brilliants gleamed
around her neck,

a diamond choker
dimmed here and there with pearls—
otherwise he would have licked
the pit of her throat
and made the small world spin,
the wheel of inward—

for every way is downward from the skin.

Take off your ornaments
he reasoned, but she
said No, the light is part of me.

6 January 2012