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ARC DE TRIOMPHE

over the bridal bed
all the wedding songs
have been sung
and sung again,
the harpers are sleeping
by their empty flagons,
the bride is dreaming
eho knows of what,
her body not quite
her own anymore.
The groom, a mere man,
wakes at dawn
stands on the shaky balcony
watching how the world
has changed. He wonders
when he begins to speak
what language will
come out of his mouth.
He isn’t worried, something
will come of it,
something always does.
Tumult sounds to the young
Brooklyn ear like fertummelt,
all mixed up, confused.
And why not? Yiddish
is the source of English,
Abraham spoke Anglo-Saxon,
a term no longer in good use.
And Noah, what did he know,
sailors are drunk all the time
humming in the language of gulls,
gannets’ hleohtor, if memory serves.
Language spills fresh
out of everything we do.

29 July 2013
Give me a chance to answer
before you ask.  A hassock
crying for a weary foot.  springboks
prancing in a travelogue.  Hammer
tapping fine chisel into gold.
Burin.  Revisions.  lbion
must wake again on these shores.
He is wherever he is spoken.
Here, this is my question.

29 July 2013
TRYING

I am meant
to do what I do.
with all my imagination
I cannot imagine
a different life for mee,
a doing something else.
This is hamartia
my fatal flaw, imagination
missing the mark.
And if I can’t imagine Other Me
what can I possibly know about you?

29 July 2013
Once I was in Fort Wayne Indiana
it was late late but I wanted to take a walk
it must have been nine-thirty or ten p.m.
I walked west along a big main street
everything closed, occasional houses
every window dark. Way up the avenue
far-off traffic lights kept changing color
the way they do when no one’s watching.
No cars moving, no trucks, no cops even.
Far ahead I saw some lights as if a store
still was open and I walked towards it
purposefully. When I got a block away
I saw it was a Burger King and turned
back the way I’d come. Sometimes
I feel like such a fucking New Yorker.

29 July 2013
IN THE TERAI

I follow him into the woods
the path is red clay, fine-grained, clear
the woods are evergreen all round

to walk into the woods is going
into the self you think you are
the matter world you carry on your bones

it’s always with you, loves you even,
sticks to you, feeds you, feeds
the brain’s need to perceive constantly

but he must be someone else
he knows the path, the fine dust
rouses at his heels, he knows

but I have no idea what he knows
I follow him alert
ignorant, anxious, trying to keep quiet

and when he sits down I will sit down too.

30 July 2013
TRA / VIATA

Gone astray
cast a story
a shadow like any other
gone into the story
always people playing there
o to be in it
pretend to be being you to me
shadow of anyone
the broken book
and what falls from it
those shattered words
pattern of beauty

a leopard in a mirror
counting his sores

his roses are blemishes
desire is the darkest sight
sees you with its hands
no one knows better
than to be me
“alone at last along”
whatever the length of you you are
you think you are
old cars have the loudest radios
black roses on a black ground
trellis written only by the skin
All Form Recapitulates Human Structure

Blue jay screams four times

the light reads like fur

but I slipped in through a rip in your clothes
you never knew I was there till I was you
we were both there two balls in a bag
two eyes in a tree

coming for me
the poor animal trapped in his desires
teachers yearn for their students
hummingbirds haunt hibiscus
teaching is an art of self-repression as expression

the leopard in the mirror
leaps out and bites
wipes the silly smile off my face
his hot breath in my mouth
glass tells me who I am
break the glass

I’m trying to gasp your name
as if I could breathe or suck you in
I am the ocean that wants you
to take you in by name alone
molten meanings forget their words
words that meant them once went far away
do you live in the hills or the hurry
with all the ripe plums green and purple
the cyclonic aggression they call Spirit
but I you here
a misspelled oak tree fall’n
leaning on an older and larger
we are longer in the world than we knew
the Sphinx was built before the rains
a man from Saugerties explained me that

säugetier in German means mammal
what can we do
we are born to suck on things
on names
we’re just some names in the rain

I need to psychoanalyze your clothes
thread by thread
since dreams too have DNA
now we can trace who’s been dreaming of you
dream forensic science
be careful who you dream of
who you touch in a dream

there was a young woman made of tin
another went sailing on a bottle
what can we do we are born to dream
maybe that is our real business
all through the galaxy angel-scribes are waiting
anxious bent in the direction of us when we sleep
eager to collect that fodder of the night

and all our daytime stuff just gives us
stray images to put into our dreams at night

the cosmos sucks on us it all is mammal after all

what do you do when you’ve gone astray
but keep going?
keep good companions:
we are mere signs of one another
can you unleash the words once woven together
everyone I mention turns out to be me
did you imagine that was just a tree
a condensation of the humid air
protoplasm waiting for its skeleton

leaps out of the mirror
bites you too
you too get all covered with roses
they grow without thorns because they grow in sleep
dreams are nasty neighborhoods
nighthoods
you should never go dreaming alone

Thank you please
I couldn’t be
without you be

the good thing is nudge your shoe
reverently to the foot of the wall
(the root of all)
close your eyes and cry I climb! I climb!
now you are Everest and alone
you must look down on everything below
weeping with pity and desire

Avalokita
be

for pity without desire doesn’t work
you need to want them
if you want them to be free
the mirror follows you around

every animal is made of glass

never believe a boat’s capacity to breast the swell
eventually everything sinks
you got me started now take me in
we roll around on the Isfahan carpet as if there were a floor
beneath all this seeming
contact with each other as if we were actually here
then childhood suddenly ends

words take over now
though we can still feel the wool of the rug
you can only resist words by saying them out loud
loud like a sheet of tin rattled in the recording studio
how they made thunder
in those days
when they cut out a pattern
and made a little girl out of tin
did you say time?
hold her silhouette against the sunset
she is singing God Bless America and means it
you mean something too

a landslide uncovers an Indian burial ground
we walk among bones
our bones feel the kinship
ivory and elephant and narwhal and you
a skull regards me
no one knows how much I remember
how dare you know me with your distant body

one licks the pen to make it write
everything needs coaxing
garden us both
hellebore on the corner lawn

we are ready for each other now
bone by bone

buy me, I have more names than flowers
I know you lick words off the wall
you explained me to myself
the world is a wall
between us and something beyond
but whether or not it is another room
in this same house we can’t be sure
maybe it is a house far away
or hidden room
or no room at all
just space running away like frightened birds

but you like the taste of the words
we love the taste of the wall
when it’s time for the truth
the door closes

you eavesdrop by the confessional
to learn the things you should have done
how much it costs to know yourself
how many sins in Sein

before we wake alone at dawn
the mirror is looking at itself
be afraid

it is waiting for you now
at any moment the image might come home

a wheel
a wheel is certainty
roses rush along the skin

of course things break
brings back
the mirror returns you to your face

on the Baltic coast ice quivered beneath my feet
how far can you go without becoming me?
shouldn’t that terrify anyone,
my breath in your mouth
not even a kiss

breath without a body
presses in you to be free
let it out

iron maiden
older woman now still made of tin

but teaching children to feel guilt
is the darkest crime
what can the teacher do
with her love
how to free the prisoners you are paid to cage

guilt zombifies the child
the woman the man the shadow on the wall
being afraid of being afraid

have you ever seen a shadow weep
heard a shadow sob
we need to break a little piece
off of the world
to spy a new world through
a new thought at least

she needs me
hurry home
skating across the pool of ink
read my future there
where hummingbirds frequent the shade

where did money come from all those years?
there has to be a sequel to a song
“ill-fares the land” he quoted
can we someday
frighten money into being good?

30 July 2013
The because of things haunts the hungry child
hacaroni does no good not even with cheese

It seems as if everything is there just as a puzzle something he has to solve he and only he

Nobody tells him anything, nobody helps. he reaches out to try with his hands

his very soft hands.

30 July 2013
Always waiting to be missed
a girl in the high country
remembers a book she read
seemed to be all about her

but how could that be,
the writer long dead and she
just out of school but still—
she looked up at the sky
over the Medicine Bow range,
the sky is close here,
she thought the sky
is always there, the sky
must have told him
this morning long ago
what it told me.

31 July 2013
NYAMs

1.
How long it takes
to lose the least thought
if all you want
is nectar pouring down
into you from some
beautiful place you also are.

2.
But easy it is
if nothing is done
and you do less

letting the heavy
settle and the light
just blow away.

3.
To skate still
on the edge
moveless between
clarity and sleep
as if you were another
catch yourself watching
and then let go?

4.
It is like this
all the time

people walking
as if through trees

they know
where they’re bound

no need to follow.

31 July 2013