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EVERYBODY A BELIEVER ONCE

Then it went away I never got over it
one way or another always grateful
for the day for being, grace for rain
a dance we always did or do. Here,
please let it be here. For I do love
the curtains of the day, the rain,
the room you’re in that lets you know it,
the room that touches. All round about
the incense of their offerings ascends.
Drifts sidewise, ancient customs in smoke.
Nobody touches anywhin. Those are
we used to say the breaks. Or all
these years I might have been wrong
and brakes is what they were saying.
Rein in the action. Make everything stop.
What a fool that would make me now,
all those years broken but going on.

6 July 2008
You want to be famous, don’t you?
I can tell by the gold cat-charm on your wrist
that you have doubts. Need luck. *Doubt
is superstition* – that’s your lesson for today.
Now undress and be of use. Sleep. Sleep.

6 July 2008
Why are biographies so short? Born this time in an old city, watched the blue flame on the gas ring – learned as much as he could from that about art, alchemy and color – the three are curiously the same, the unexamined trinity that rules our lives – grew up, wrote books and made things, passed. Fill in the details. We get a touching vignette, something to occupy a spare column-inch in a magazine. Filler. But who was he? Who was he before, and who will he be again? Who is he now? Why can’t we read the whole life, not just the local apparition in this neighborhood of time? Every child is a stranger come home for the first time again. It must be something like that. Where does this street lead?

7 July 2008

I think that every being has a jatakamala, a garland of births, we must finger and follow, bead after bead.

Steiner in his Karmic Relationships shows something of that, but his are the celebrated incarnations of celebrated men. And their apparitions are discontinuous in time – where were ‘they’ while they were not? We need those intervening lives. Total Biography, then. Right now we have, for the most part, only such instrumentation as fancy, reverie, meditation, imagination – but we must use what we have, till we have better, to follow the life of someone through lives.

In some life of his or mine, again and again the blue flame (now the gas stove, then perhaps a lake, a jewel, an eye, a corpse-fire on the strand) will recur, be a linking image of renewed awareness, a here-again, and this is you.

Seeing that blue flame he knew he was himself. We come home to what we permit ourselves to see. Really see.
Save it but why now
for your true love so early
abandonment of any touch

of granite prompted ivory
frontal matter to face
dectic the music
aftermaths—
of open eye
mere knowing

be calm.

7 July 2008
Mousehanded quick
the workday begins
tucks panoply rehearsed
whine of roadbed
smitten smote
our mere ears. Amerika now
mostly about noise.

7 July 2008
Half-hemmed half-vague
a word rolls in—

the sands of nescience
soak a while with sense

but how can it be meaning
if it dries out in the sun

leaving nothing behind just
sea creatures bleached on the shore?

Or does all the speaking
mean just that one thing?

8 July 2008
Watching a candle flicker is not the same as watching light.

8.VII.08
ORACLE

You must know by now
I am another person
another party to that disastrous contract
I signed with my breath.

I also change. There, that bitter
et in Arcadia we all carry
carries me away
from the little road and the roaring of the sea.

Everything speciates
fast as it can. That’s another
way of saying it. I have pulled
all my insides out for you to see

festooned every tree with what I thought.
And left a fine resonant hollow
afterthought to stand for me,
to sound out all the prophecies you need.

Wind in the trees makes more sense than me.

8 July 2008
Reading Mont Saint Michel & Chartres in the summerhouse. But reading it on the Palm Pilot, fuzzy little letters of Adams’s grand definitions. I read about the repose of massive Norman architecture, the modesty of it. Which is not perhaps as reposeful as it first seems. The anxiety of weight, restlessness of sheer volume. I worry. I look into the morning woods round three sides of the hut. Dawn has given way to morning. Trucks on the highway ad lib in the bird choirs. Light and heat increase. The word stays where it was put, cool, sensitive. So many years.

8 July 2008
Teaching what we don’t know  
Remembering what never happened.  
Forgetting everything that did.

Measuring all this with units different for each measured thing.

Can’t we measure light and sound in inches,  
something our hands know,  
can’t we measure love in decibels?

Or why not one measure for all things—  
then we’d really see what things are like,  
how many units of it does light make  
or love take up. Or you for that matter,  
moving on the edges of my mind?

8 July 2008
The cock crew
late as eight
thirty sun
already hours old

who could he
be rousing
either one of him
over traffic skirl

such a bright sound
out of the sky
it must be time
for me to sleep

I who am the opposite of the world.

8 July 2008
[End of NB 306]
The permission of it
the bird of it in fact
the close-up we’ve been waiting for
her face the whole screen

her eyes and we remember
her body a far country
even then a faltering surprise
as if even long ago we knew

the child of it discovering
the rule of the senses
those misleading distances
we finally decided to trust.

9 July 2008
Llul, and not mad, listen: the world is not sad as you think, there is a heave or wave runs through lifting yes and letting fall. Cosmos is this. Not the water or its salt. The other thing, the agitation of. Remembering is what we do that comes closest to what it is.

The filter, and it fails.

9 July 2008
ESPOIR

Not yet it seems to be not yet
or yet to be about to be about
time but not this time not yet

a time will come to be not yet
to be but be about to be it will
be yet the time not yet to be.

9 July 2008
Let it natural as it can
— you won’t be the loser for it
bankrupt vocabulary of I love you
not just the language but
the way it sticks to you.
I have seen men die I have never seen men kill.
Nothing is as it seems
is all.

Of course the franchise.
Night and day, like a song
all too familiar, diesel smell
bus pass, wait on the corner.
O to be able to see a whole avenue
so far, all the way to the beginning
where the apartment houses
converge on infinity.

Paradigm
scattered when the sparrows flap off,
mouse-quick, left alone with my fear.

Why should I keep everything away?
Or give apparel to a needy knight?
Am I not power?

9 July 2008
To touch her skin
and know: this skin speaks French!
The shock of that. How
could she be so different and be right here?
I have no right to touch another language.
Yet could it be that language
is not even skin deep?
Does it evaporate away like water
leaving us to dry in the sun?

9 July 2008
I don’t know how to do this thing I do so well.
It dreams me out loud and someone later seems to have it written down.
It could be summer or another city, walking quick along the Isar hurrying home, huge nylon German flag obscures the window.
Then the river turns around.
The woman frightens me, talk is my only protection and we have no language, nothing that we share.
It all comes down to language, even my own is terrifying, the gap between the words where anything might come.

9 July 2008
Come slyly summerhouse
mistress of your own quietude
bé gone over midriff cities stay
by sea. Rhyme more with me

your cid your campion
tea flower robust hilltalk high
in shadow meet and fall by there
chamberlain of anything else

is the me in this histoire
your easy clothes or hard design
fill up with caterwauling ballerinas
I knew one until your street is full

then call the hope police those bluejay
hollerers at the brink of light’s
nationalities weird smelly kitchens
the way their noise won’t fit your ears

how hip the hour is to mere design!
sand spill or glass break a beaker
your experiment is on the floor as usual
never hoist an honest sarabande

though you did hear Tell a silent shelter
in a rain of flowers meant born again
someone not common as you think
lilies flush pink round noble chalices

or sliced oblique across the tip to yield
one perfect frustrum of pure darkness
but in the shadow that it in its turn casts
the speartip of the lost original still points
at the proper angle origin shows through
I wasn’t asking you for consolation
or to laugh at our shared hurt O shut
that script our intermède is merrier
can’t we ever get away from dialogue
and find what one of us at least means
for real that would be ocean and not neat
the nice thing about meeting is parting soon
provocation admiration and quick release
hie thence to each’s proper wildernes
you make it sound ugly it is only what it is
lily-less incantation in a lost vernacular

touch forearm no tougher than a shadow.

10 July 2008