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BRUCKNER

.  

Something 
in the back of the mind,

the old shed, shack, 
corner burlap 
sack of potatoes 

we poor men eat this.

Not now.  Something else. 
Now is paper.  
Scissors.  
A whole orchestra 
trying to remember.  
Who were we when we were?

Sometimes sun stuns.

He falls off his horse 
all the way into the sky 
down, 

if you think 
everything is a matter of distance 
and no unit 
of measurement 
measures us all.

No measure.  
Immoderate music  
a cloakroom full of violins 

but I wanted amber, the umber 
of shadow on suntanned 
women also trying to remember 

everybody was who everybody was.
Now if you get lost in this music,
this knot-browed deep-breathing kneeling music,
you’ll be in a place where everything is found,

why should I bother you
with imagining
to make you remember
the everlasting Christmas of the heart

music is always people on the move
but where are they going?

where the star fell off its sky
and came to us
and we listen,

can I wear you on my hands
can I touch the world by you
can I pick it up and bring it home?

Home is the hard word here,

to live at last in the word
or even the sound of a word
the realest estate

to live in your word.

Your Magdalen mouth.

21 November 2008
Why don’t I credit you, you’re a boy, and boys just mess around with words. Girls tell the truth, always, even when they lie. Every word out of their lips is God’s own truth how could it be otherwise?

*This is a postcard from the world.*
*I am sending it to you on 21 November 2008*
AN OPERA FOR CHARLOTTE AT HER TURNING YEAR

Suppose there were a uniform men could wear
to say their hearts belonged to such an one
and to no other. Suppose old-fashioned language
took off its dusty coat and closed its eyes

and made a wish by the Fountain of the Truth,
tossing silver alphabets in to calm
that gaudy noisy turbulent upwelling
that soaks the betweennesses of things

so they stick to one another and there we are.
We would know then what we need to do.
Sky-blue, like Robespierre’s culottes,
or mud-brown like Prince Andrei’s shoulder blades

and him looking up at heaven empty as a hand.
Radical chic. Time is an aging dancing girl
who’s lost her castanets. Thinking is the only
weapon the poor have to strive against the rich

but resentment blunts the edge of thinking.
Or green as Esmeralda’s petticoat. Or pink
like the pulp of overripe bitter-gourd,
the knobby cuke called karela in India.
Or with stars on our shoulders and straps
from sternum to the small of back, ribbons
sliced along the brave left chest, and a hat,
a hat, no warrior without a hat. Make mine
a green fez, I am a mature man still faithful
to the Sultan of incremental light.
I think the music must be over now, I hear
nothing but applause, sounds like shallow waves

shilly-shallying on a pebbly shore. Up there
out of sight some woman is bowing
bold as a man and her arms hold flowers.
Tribute. And bells on her toes. The Countess

has chosen at last, decided she wants both.
Because both is the same as neither, midnight
nears and she wants to be alone. White.
Color stops time for one moment,

thank god we’re not living in the dark,
a glass full of roses is better than wine.
Where we are is the bravest house
and of all things, beginning is best.

22 November 2008
To sit outside because the rain
is not,
Sometimes a leaf
runs away like a bird
fallen on purpose
and hurrying
towards its new life
away from any tree
out from the old
neighborhood
into the free place
where even we
someday can live

I bring my color
with me, I am here.

22 November 2008
Interminable evidence

no one needs leading—
a soul?

a spill of light where I am only
dark

hearing sunlight

make shadow on a page
and follow

the darkness home.

23 November 2008
But something could.
It’s what goes on in the head
walking home from concerts
that kind of ear won’t stop
hearing, a worm that turns
turns again. Will never get home.
Will the bus ever come.
The street goes there
sure as sugar, straight lines
get there. The piano
still is jabbering but inside.
Inside inside. All that skill
kills. At least the music.

23 November 2008
For some time now I have abstained
from telling you what to do
and you see what you’ve done while I’ve been silent
it’s enough to wake me up and shout at you
you with your broken towers and your stupid wars
that never win and always kill
you blew it and I blew it by letting you do it
I trusted I’d told you enough and more than enough
but you went right on dying.

23 November 2008
Something nearby
nearly touching
an acre:
        one furlong by one chain
a simple measure.

The oldest things only can be touched,
earth friable, rock solid.
The glacier left them,
science understands the meagerest
song, the doo-wop of parliaments
leads men and women away from love.

Hardly know what it means,
the secret is not loving anybody,
drink only dew, chew
dense bread like something
the sun broke and let fall,
then waiting. Something will come along.
There is always something more.

23 November 2008
But there was something there,  
a voice in the furnace  
that spoke through the pipes all through the house  
not a word exactly  
but you could hear it and understand  

something is speaking  
is more important than what it says  

the way lovers make do with breath on the nape of the neck  
breath in the hollow of the throat.  

A noise in the night  
saying I am not alone.  
There is something to hear  
and the senses are the only guarantee the world gives.  

Not that we trust them.  
Not that there is anything really to hear—  
just the hearing itself  

sucking the vagrant airs in.  

24 November 2008
But if it didn’t begin talking yet
how could I listen.

Answering is easy
isn’t it, always built into
the question
like a star in the sky.
You are the cloud,
nuvoletta,

between me and there
I stopped listening, it was poetry
again and we needed something more.
But there was no more.

24 November 2008
But in this country we disjoint
an idea before we swallow it.

Amazing how nourishing
even logic can be when you take it

one syllable at a time.
Whereas a philosopher is a man

staring at a sheet of cardboard
saying over and over This is a mirror.

this is my fine mirror, I am beginning
to see something even now.

24 November 2008
Crimes against the mind always start in the mind.

What can we learn from this? And why? And who?

24.XI.08
But it was close, the sky
that day, as if in randomness
a city were, and in its streets
a gorgeous population roamed

and each one in that bright crowd
understood me and wanted me.
What else do you recall, I asked,
but my patient had gone back to sleep.

25 November 2008