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Hollow Earthers who surround a secret safe below us all.
Sink to find. Come down with me. Go down. Here stand
The Mothers, the real place of which our surface is only
a ripple on the ceiling of the sky, la vecchia, reflection. Down there
is origin, the place with no face or we are its only face

now think inward from the eyes
or sink down through all the orthodox entrances:
this is the place dreams come from,
it calls us all the time the calm women
harp and loom, pools listening us the way.

11 January 2007
for Cyrus Teed (Koresh)
Calm day mind sits
watch the lilies
in the blue vase the
mind no different
from what it sees.

11 January 2007
EVENING GLASS

Only in the darkest room
dare turn the light on before the mirror

the mirror has its own twilight
I love, it leads my eye
deep inside another self inside

room after room to a far away,
a room turns into the sky
beyond all the plausible forests.

And only one enemy I every see in there,
look around him,
beside him, beyond him
to find the truth of things deep inside.

11 January 2007
There was a man who ate with his ears
who ate with his eyes
everything he heard turned into wheat
corn silk was the hair of the women he loved
so many of them because he could hear them too

he married them for their voices
he ate how they looked
there was a man who lived on a map of the world
and out of his fingers every morning
flew pictures of birds.

12 January 2007
Now I can water the dog
and walk the radiator, slow, slow,
its heavy ribs, its little feet
and me with my breviary in my paws
saying my Office it’s called
the work of the day they say
sanctificatio temporis
making the season holy or
sanctifying the passage of time.
The dog shakes itself, the radiator’s
lean spine hackles up
in front of the women’s clothing store
gazing up at the array of knee socks,
it knows what’s lacking in its life
but not in mine, I can walk
the sidewalk and I do every day
and never have to lift my eyes from the book
when they read such long psalms such
useful stories – as just today at matins
I read of Saint Sandarac who exchanged
his blood with an aging stranger
only the find the stranger was Christ
whose blood made him immortal
and he’s still alive, some have seen him,
he lives in a condo outside Verona
and he has a little dog too, and someday
I plan to visit him there, but I really can’t go
until after my radiator finally dies.

12 January 2007
It is uphill, Sam,
this snowfield of the living room

and there are women to help us
but only with their prayers

rosaries we hear their murmur
canaries too, the few that we let fly in

before we set out from the kitchen door,
Sam, to try to make our way to the window,

at least once every day
we have to try to see what’s going on outside,

we have to climb the steep carpet,
help each other, help me, Sam,

catch my breath for me, it’s trying
to get out the window before me, don’t let it,

it’s caught in the music, all the uncles
pummeling the pianos

all the aunts dancing in each other’s arms
fox trots, help me, sambas, help me,

only a mile or so to the blue
glass coffee table with the ashtray on fire

then a furlong to the sofa, we’ll make it,
we’ll lean on the back of it as we climb,

the heavy drapes are in sight now,
scarlet damask, they cost the moon,

gold threads in them and a soft tender
dust comes out of the dragon pattern when we grab,

pull them aside, we’re there, we’re gasping
but this is the window, we’re here
now look out and tell me what you see—
cars and golden meadows and a horsecart full of apples,

Sam, it was worth it, hold me,
we were born in the right world after all.

2.
But it is a bird
unfolds its wings

no it’s a book you hear
talk to itself in the dark

flexing its pages
letting them fall

who knows if the words it reads
are the same as we read

later in daylight when we lift
the pages for ourselves

heavy heavy
read and let them fall

and let our eyes jitney down the lines
picking up random travelers

but maybe it is a bird
shaking out its wings after all

a midnight cormorant
come here to get dry

it’s always nighttime in the second movement
the pianist’s fingertips flickering candle flames.

3.
Of course I lived there
over Carbondale Mountain in summer snow
how odd, bear pawprints
left on the trunk of the Pontiac
my father could never wash off
something about bear sweat bear fat
something the water couldn’t move

down to the river, pebbles white as clam shells
dry the stream only a trickle
dryness always scared me
I was born here for the water
used to drink a pitcher of it cold
at every meal, what ever happened to me

where did my thirst go?
sometimes I feel it coming back again
and then I know, no,
it’s you it’s you the only one
I ever wanted, the water
that walks towards me the water that smiles.

12 January 2007
Nothing is numbered
a waltz used to count
tree-birds in the castle hop
a tweet like spring
midwinter rain the edges
shear off in new places
glaciers come to town
terms, we’re at the end
of something, sense, since
when the waltz the hip
the dangerous commodity
of packaging experience
rutilant the crystals
upright in the cabochon
give the impression of a star
without the inconvenience of a sky
to store it in, here, on your hand
alone the dog of light learns how to bark.

13 January 2007
M upside down. For Murderer. Moloch his true name, to whom thousands of children are sacrificed, some dressed up as soldiers, some in rags like civilians, a delicate difference he knows how to savor – M, the child murderer. All the TV talking heads keep us confused with phony explanations about war and politics. He just likes to kill. And we are paying for his frat boy thrills not just with taxes but with our souls complicit in the society that spawned him, tolerates him, and lets him rule. All we ever get from war is death. But that’s all he wants.

13 January 2007

Saturday. A sad day, a day often wasted writing of politics and grief, and anger, impotent, useless, worse than useless, discharging the very animus that might rise up as political gesture. Anger that weakens. Anger that swells when we contemplate sheer blossomless evil, Iago passing us in church, he brushes against us, smiles, and we shudder but smile back.

[End of Notebook 295]
Alpenstock for Richard

to climb at last up in the Engadin

and catch your flower

live at the cow’s foot

by the burdock

rank in alpine meadows.

Lean on the stick

and think of clarinets

at Jewish weddings in the valley.

The secret Semitism of Christ

haunts our language,

when the Jews took over England

they only came to claim their own.

Your father’s time, or his,

and the mines blacked more than brick

and white silk scarves the miners wore

for god knows what vanity or hope.

Ask the Jews, they’d know, they know

the meaning and the worth of everything—

which is why so many of your poets

were anti-semites, poets of a certain kind

always want the meanings of what they mention

to be provisional, surprising, adulterous,

under their more or less intentional control:

the song.

We keep hearing about music

but never hear it.  Or we hear it

but forget to listen, supposing it to be

something else or new, a Carolina wren

belatedly burbling in January still

like an old word put to new employment.

You lean on a rock and remember.

Once you owned everything you saw

by the sheer acuity of seeing it.

Now I think it’s not you I’m talking to.

I knew nothing about you, you were a friend,

hence indecipherably close, a mystery
sealed like an old cistern in the cellar,
we walk above it every day and try hard
not to think about it,

          a friend, a province
full of insurgents, a friend, a palm tree
full of rats, dates, fronds, quotations
carved in the meek bark, anybody
can scribble into the life of a tree,
greenhouse tobacco, cloud of testimonies,
a friend, a mountain in another country
its shadow falls in this, we stand by the border
and admire, up there the rattlesnakes
coil by the springs asleep in morning sunshine,
a firetower is looking back at me.

          Even
from here I see the glint of your binoculars
searching me out from the land of the dead,
quieter than Switzerland, awkward
as Eastern woodlands, scant fama,
you watch me with the maddening conviction
of all the dead, you have survived your guilt,
you measure my distance in lights and years.

13 January 2007
[Start of NB 296]
BIBER: No.1, d minor

1.
The romance
of remembering—
that is the wood
they carved us from.

Oak. Angels.
Dark. We cut
the forest down
to spite them.

Or requite
their curious love
caring inward in us
a word in wood

2.
a soul is
a remembering and a comparing
let loose
in ordinary time

Christmas done Easter yet to come
there is a hillock in these days
sore Christians have to climb

the wind sobs for them they think
but it is just the wind
what else could it be?

3.
Chatter of demons
artists applauded
sweet birds in limed trees
mild winter rain
a little line that coils around them all.

14 January 2007

LIFE

Compose during one performance revise during another. Could that be it?
Keep the conscious mind at bay, like in the old days.

You call that poetry?

I call it thinking out loud, smiling though, with your back turned on what is being thought.

15 January 2007
BERIO: DUE PEZZI

1. calmo

when nothing touches
the skin
right upper arm
close as memory

neat fitting near

who can help me remember?

a barn or a farm a furrow
a wagon tumbling with cauliflowers

flies show the way
be numerous be vigilant

unPeter unsober

quia pauper quotation
separation is so Viennese

something brown around the shoulders
span
inside the little wooden box voice of a man

2. quasi allegro alla marcia

heron standing, oystercatcher stalking
every twig and branchlet sheated in ice
enough light to go around

ah romance,
the slim hips of a silkworm
grieving in us, all
the misery

Pachamama from Peru
so evidently woman
but her back’s a man a bronze
you brought home a broken mountain.

15 January 2007
Biber, No.2, A major

1.
Grain of wood
copper distilling apparatus
it rained in the Renaissance
all thought becomes a child’s lost toy

wooden top spun out beyond the stars
wooden horse buried under the rose bush
lead soldiers colonize the earth.

2.
And even so there is such dancing
as love built her marina for,
wave and courtesan and tender papà

long street in Hudson falling to the river
and no way to get up again in all this snow
every place is just a room in one big house

but whose? I call it love, you say it
with soft esses, housses, the way they do
in California where the sun even lost her way.

3.
Up and atom I used to hear,
dawn and design, upper limit music
are you sure, lower limit a man

holding a fiddle woman holding a bow.

15 January 2007
There is a wild pig kind of animal
runs around in the woods around here,
*Sus scrofa*, ordinary pig I think.
This one has tusks made of silver.
Though sometimes when you see him
at twilight looking out at you
from the edge of a clearing you’d swear
the teeth were made of gold. Sometimes
it’s hard for someone not a scientist
to tell one metal from another. Especially
in sunlight. But in rain it all is silver.