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We would speak about it in later years,
one more story that never ended, left
us guessing and fitting the pieces together
always certain we didn’t have enough of them.
A pattern of liberty and loss. A color
— mostly memory — and a sound like
the notes of a simple tune played all
at the same time so no one could tell.
Tell means hear how things that happen
together have and are separate destinies.
Telling me from you the old books call it.
Or how these violets differ from the
presumptuous and ever-present grass.

6 May 2007
Maybe I don’t remember enough to have a story. Some old movie, *The Thin Man* maybe who never looked particularly thin to me but then nobody was thin in those days. And their démodé dog. That sort of thing I remember,

I ask a lot of my friends, leaping and so on from subject to object, getting the names just wrong enough you think they might be right.

There never was a German Empire, there is no city anywhere named Shanghai.

I wonder if I’m pronouncing correctly these words and persons who don’t exist — worry is good for the bloodstream, a steady agitation about this and that.

Wear down the opposition with uncertainties! Paint the sky! Is that what I’m trying to communicate?

6 May 2007
Poetry
even if it does nothing else
it maps the moment of the mind.

[Enough of it, those, over a few thousand years and we might know who we are.]

6 May 2007
PHAE德拉

Why have I I wonder never
paid much heed to Phaedra
too much I and not enough she
in me for me to find the key
to those sorts of feelings I
who never had husband
never had son never was
in love with anyone
who wasn’t somehow me?
Even writing her name down scares me.

I am a surrealist standing at the window
with my back turned to the street. And yet
there are times when I secretly think
my mother was the ocean and my father a king.

Does that bring me close to you, sallow
woman of a certain age, in love

with the one person on earth you couldn’t be?

6 May 2007
The Pakistani driving the cab
is your own body. Or
you are the princess in the Chariot
being carried right
out beyond the Tarot cards
into the inconceivable actual
where I am is waiting for you.

6 May 2007
for Mary Reilly
When the fibers reach the house
ey they bring strange messages.
Do you want that kind
of light in your house?
Like a bathtub you consecrated
to your turtle collection
weeks ago and now what?
What on earth are
any of us ever going to do?

7 May 2007
And even the young girls are fifty years old.
Something changes. An oboe
then the bassoon, then the light
went out. Music does that.
You wake up very old
with a dead cigarette in your fingers.

7 May 2007
FLOWERS, or why I will read you poems from my books

[for the Green Hermeticism conference]

What is a flower.

The playful rationalists who run the sciences say: the sexual organs of the plant.

Nice. But one unknown is not explained by another.

We would know more about flowers if we knew what the sexual organs of an animal are.

We know what they do and what generative functions they perform.

But what are they?

The flower is the most conspicuous, most displayed process of the plant, whereas the genitals are the most hidden.

In what sense then are flowers sex organs?

The rationalist is always confused between function and identity, as if a thing is only what it does.

Which means it could not do another thing.

And that is just what a flower does,

It is what it is and does another thing.

2.
Tonight, in this place, we suppose ourselves to be investigating the other thing that a flower does.

The thing called healing, but that our ancestors thought rather of: its signature, its place in the structure of the world.
To know the signature of things is why we’re here.

A signature is an identity sworn to, made explicit. The signature of a flower (or: the signature that a flower is) is a contract made with us, not because we are special, but because we are woldlings, inhabitants, old-timers, born with the place.

I will think about the flower called the hydrangea. It is not famous. Let us see what we can know about it.

Know by poetry. It is blue.

[7 May 2007]
When he says blue
he means things are far away
like friends remembered through a haze of gin
then, not now, he hasn’t had a drink in years.

But all those old altitudes
and riffs of spirit are still stored
in him – where else could they go,
the world doesn’t have an elsewhere

does it? When he says green
he means a Christian hope in Buddha-fields
all round him and to come
when he meets himself at last and his self

turns out to be Christ himself,
the world doesn’t have any extra selves,
just oneself in all of one’s coyote guises
Juan Faust Parsifal Saint Francis Milarepa

we all die young even when we die very old.

8 May 2007
Spagyric note:

To solve: the immense mystery of what a crystal is,

a crystal is the dream of numbers when they sleep,

or their sleep is our waking,

or a crystal is (to speak in the language assigned to flowers) the sugar of time. *Sac. Temp.* it will say on the old apothecaries’ jar.

8 May 2007
MOIETIES

People, and people you don’t mind doing favors for.

People, and people you’d rather not touch though you like them well enough.

People, and people you’d like to touch though my might not like them much.

What is touch?

Touch is the enactment of propinquity in spirited matter, with pheromones obbligato.

8 May 2007
PRELUDE & CHORALE

1.
Organize the tiers
that climb the dome
until – tiers ever diminishing
in circumference – the
highest tier floats unsupported.
This is where authority.

Like rain through a hole in the roof
once left smoke out too
in a day when together meant
being bodily anew.

All music turns out to be about touch.
All architecture consoles you in your loneliness.

2.
Just in time
you’ve come to me
to learn the meaning
of all art.

Every painting
on the wall
is your dead mother.
Grieve.

And every
written word
a barked command
from a weary old
schoolmaster
dying of repression,
dying of drink.
Only silence
silence comes along and helps, sometimes silence is a little scratch

9 May 2007
NO-SEE-EMS OF EARLIEST SPRING

come feast on me,
a kind of natural god
every living body
knows how to perform,

the ritual is built in,
feeding the ghosts
that fill all space,
giving little gnats
something to drink.

They think our eyes
pools of fresh water
glistening for them alone
in the desert of the air.

9 May 2007
If you could only walk through some door into this moment. If you could just be here.
When the word wakes up
it will slap many a cheek
bite many a lip,
when the word wakes up
the admiral will set sail
guiding the famous lost flotilla
bravely out into the néant
most of us know best
from the chalice of some flower
like a daffodil that we bend
to our lift to us and sniff deep
forgetting or not knowing
that this kind has no smell,
no fragrance, just a feel
of freshness, so we’re not
too sorry that we bothered,
by now the fleet is out of
sight on a grey morning
gone,
so somewhere we speak of me as a friend,
a konzertführer to certain local musics,
somewhere an angel practices
pronouncing my name in several languages
hope he gets to mind in my lifetime—
that strange clock less Dante and more Dali
that sets the pace for other people’s mourning,
ok,
the flower empty as the sea,
just the fragrance of a fresh day,
we’re back on track now,
the word is waking up.

10 May 2007
Plenty insecurity
scared of waitresses
since they belong
to everybody hence
her attention
is a competition
just to make her smile.
O just be here
when you talk to me
he prays
in his head.
What good
is a prayer
he doesn’t say out loud,
a prayer that God
can’t hear?
And who is God
in this parable?
And what is a word for?

10 May 2007
A gnat nipped
the pinna of my
left ear upon
the sunrise side.
Morning in general
has too many teeth.
I don’t really know what it’s doing
but I’m trying to lift a stone bigger than I am
off a lawn I don’t own and make it float
legal at last in the lower dialect of sky
where everybody can feel it and like what they feel
and take shelter under it from the rain and you know
all the things that wind up coming down
on you and me, what they used to call a parcel
of trouble and nobody but you and me
to unwrap it and see what’s inside.
Because (you said just last night) curiosity
is a virtue too, but is it transcendental?
We’ll see I guess when we get the box open
and see what she in her wisdom left inside.

10 May 2007
for K.S.