8-2007

augC2007

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But is it always too much for me
I think it is, the sea

and these august vivacious personages
who haunt its in and out

approach approach recede recede
a million year ballet they’ve made of that

simplicity

and the seal is my mother.
Ten years after her death

we saw her in Galway Bay, her kind eyes
calm company she kept us as we strolled.

10 August 2007
I have built my house
of many failures
each one apt for its function

a mosaic a thousand chips
of broken glass add up to Christ
looking down sadly farewelling the earth

but he can never leave.
And my house of failure
stands tall on the hillside—

a ruin has no enemies
birds and lizards and echoes
all live at peace in the shade.

10 August 2007
Where we work is always another.

_A don i ram_ the chords spell out,
Adoniram the architect
who is slain into his work

And the temple also vanishes into time.

The work a man has done
goes into thin air
when his life is gone, the same air
into which his last breath yields,

and the name of his death is his son.

But this thin air of ours thin as paper holds the work
in suspension always—
that is the Lost Word
of his Freemasons,
the word once spoken
can never leave our world,

our world is the place
where every word is wrapped,

word lost into air—
and it is the movement of the air we hear,
word lost in the ear.

I’m listening to an old opera nobody knows, about Solomon’s Temple and the Queen of Sheba, and the mysterious architect who built the latter’s form into the former so that she lives forever in what has been lost,

Gounod’s _La Reine de Saba_, into which the words of the great mystic poet Nerval are lost,
lost into the singing,
lost into music and the music lost I find,

the Queen is singing as I speak.

10 August 2007
As if there were something we had to do first
even before waking

so we lie there in bed and open our eyes
conscious of having missed something already

what was it, an opportunity,
a glimpse of some god?

11 August 2007
I want to tell you about it
whoever it was
the boy on the swing
reading a book as he moved
more by gravity than by will,
swayed by what we share,
air, earth, fire, water. And you
who are listening to me now.

An impertinence, from me to you,
one more of so many, a not
quite legitimate caress.

11 August 2007
Watch. Activity of some sort
rappelling down the rock face

or just a face, a man's
face, not all that old,

you scaled the bridge of the nose,
now the overhang of brow

and the one descending meets you there
and you discuss the Person

on whose calm face you climb.
Is he dead? Asleep?

Enlighted? Indifferent?
Why doesn't he brush you away?

Why are we permitted still
our ascensions and descents?

11 August 2007
We live on a planet of forced marriages.
The extravagant architecture of a grasshopper
dizzies our aesthetics,
we creep along
full of unlikely loves.

11 August 2007
CARREFOUR

Centuries of dismay
walk around the same old streets

same one, same old crossroads
a hundred thousand years,

crossroads
we are about them,
sitting, intercepting,
never going anywhere

that's the half of us.

The cross and the arrow:
the stayer and the goer.

The right spot and the all gone.

11 August 2007
Spirits of the utterly gone
are gone.

What stays
are airs they moved by speaking.

These perish.

Vibrations linger, part
of a vibratory dream we machine.

All the ancestors have gone down into us.

II August 2007
Our ghosts walk
along the London street,
father, grandmother,
a statue of someone
who looks terribly like you
yourself, there,
over the somber garden.
Maybe we are the ghosts
as music is the body’s ghost
the hands the chest
expand the air
the god
is there!
And then the singer dies.
Ghosts chase us in the streets.

11 August 2007
(to celebrate Pir Zia’s academy)

The heart behind the heart
we have we need
the columns of her house

one single child is running
in her shadows, hides
behind every column turn by turn

one single child
who keeps me on my toes
panting I follow

and strange to say
you’re chasing after that child too,
you’re quick when I’m slow

you stop when I go
hardly ever do I get a clear
sighting of the child

sometimes I do
hardly ever get a glimpse
of you also pursuing

sometimes when I stop to catch my breath
and stare deep into the shadows of her house
I wonder if you might be the child I’m chasing

or maybe even I’m the one
you’re after all these years
heart of the other.

12 August 2007
I still need the sky.
I try to live without
but there it is

every now and then
it kisses the nape of my neck
and then I know

But what do I know?
the goal is the path.
Struggle to be here—

there are August days
when ice cream is answer enough.

12 August 2007
He put down his measuring tape
and stalked off through his eyeglasses
into the amber world

Yes, I am here again
he said when he got there

men swinging hammers
a flock of purple finches bothering the trees

So that’s what they mean by ritual
he thought and thought again

there is no ceremony but the skin.

12 August 2007
CASTAWAY SUMMER

Drift out of a former revolution.  
Close quartered, an army sleeps.  

Is that you, jackdaw, perched  
black with a little white  

on the phone pole, listening?  
Are you listening to me?  

Teach me her profile clear  
so I will recognize it when she comes  

evening sky, no stars.

12 August 2007
Know what darkness knows
a life for the perceiver
ripening in these, down there
where music rises
to the surface like pain,
one more mysterium

Of an eye
opening
garage door swings up
empty
smell of warm old wood
kept
into cool twilight
dead space
suddenly wakes

“like pain”
as if a comparison
could ever or could even
as if.

Big plans
try to let go of plans
Big plans of being able to let go

A fetch
they called it
who from me
went out
into the pretend world
pretending
to be successful
as an ordinary
a man on the street
a man on two feet
but failing
would come back
real enough
to rend me,
break me
into my elements
and ocean them
ever away

as if God
had come
and touched me

as if God
were a thought
1 had sent out
to explain the world
now
come back to rend me

three-person’d Deity
1 and you
and those scraps of matter
once called me

*ich nichts*

And this molecular recombining
the sage calls Love
and writes hymns to

we are safe in the process
every word comes home
the mind empowerment

A trickle of water down my cheek or is it sweat

We are guilty of our explanations.

13 August 2007
The ship, tired of sinking, sticks to the postcard waves. Orange sunset, purple troughs of sea, the works. Send it to me so I can know what going looks like, a single shape snouting somewhere invisibly far through some sustaining medium. Oh. Now I get it, there is nowhere to go, only the boat. The passengers busy with deck shuffleboard and tom collines and playing quoits really are just standing still. The ship stands, still on its postcard, named. I think I am beginning to understand.

13 August 2007
if I could have anything
it would be to have the natural compassion
wanting not to lose a single
soul a single life
a single grain of salt

but does my wanting that mean it’s close
or even further away?
desire distances. actual feeling nears.

13 August 2007