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[dream etymologies, 2]

In dream I learn that the phrase *vain scrutiny* is a technical term, and means a secret meeting or covert illegal assembly. At first I think this must be a mistake or mistranslation in the book I’m reading (I’m often reading a book in a dream).

But then in the dream I go to the dictionary, which gives that as the proper meaning indeed of the phrase, evidently a calque or translation from a Slavic expression – I see the Russian phrase in Cyrillic.

In the story I had been reading when the phrase cropped up, the illicit meeting had been infiltrated by police provocateurs.

28 December 2007
Every morning I wake I feel
at last I’m home, having
returned from, recovered from,
an enormous journey
detailed and demanding,
such exertions my whole
life might not be enough to restore.
And so the day goes
mounting to the glory of noon
and everything still to be said
and everything said already.

28 December 2007
Then it is come,  
almost midnight before it got to be morning,

and from the timely darkness  
what animal comes in now for its milking?

28 XII 07
Narcissus cut himself on the mirror,
the clock hands stabbed him,
the mailbox cursed him from the curb
and still he couldn’t believe,
  couldn’t believe.

It is about not being beautiful.
It is about doubt,
about the logic of establishing as real,
about epistemology
and soft little snow puddles that show
the new risen hunchback moon
looking at itself in every water.

No glass no sea without its moon.
Not being beautiful enough
or never getting enough morning
or being not someplace else but this place,
this arm around no one but this very one.

Never get enough of that,
daybed symphony,
Sibelius pouring out of her clothes—
the only noble thing left on earth is nakedness.

28 December 2007
They talk about the deep woods sometimes as cathedrals, the great trees standing for the fluted columns in those huge buildings. Shafts of sunlight piercing foliage, writing bright shapes along the leaf-thick earth.

But just now I saw a dearer thing, a little parish church, made by deep mist around our house, slender trees enough to shape and break the glare of the traffic light at the highway crossing, its red a ruby sanctuary lamp in the side chapel, arguing the Real Presence safe in its tabernacle.

In mist, everything is hidden, everything is clear, everything is the same distance away.

28 December 2007
How much time
fits in time
or how much time
can we fit in?

Time is a weird hotel,
expensive,
not too comfortable.
The Riviera

always seems close
but never there.
Even the balcony
looks out just at air,

we could be anywhere
but here we are,
no plausible exit
marked on the wall,

we feel each other passing,
I clutch you to stop
the dizzying hallway,
the bottomless bed.

28 December 2007
Mist in snow woods

my mind
or was it

anybody’s

to see the air at last
is someone’s face

*

The quiet of it
as if it had just thought me up

and I was glad to be.

*

Then color came

the higher clouds had shifted east into the rising sun, so that
a faint blue began in the high west
and then grew truer, sheer blue through sheer

matrix, mother of everything, the pale

I was a child being shown a prism, how
from that single sun beginning to be clear up here
colors happened over there

and colors were born into the world

29 December 2007
Time to get born again
whenever I look
at the clock it says
12:48 the moment
(PM) I was born.
Don’t listen. Don’t look.
Just get born again.

29 XII 07
So this is straw winter
string winter
tie a string of straw around
your wrist & draw you close

loop a slim pencil line
or silverpoint
tarnished meaning
into the paper:
your picture

You tied the string of you
around my mind.

29 December 2007
Let the pope tell you
how to slice tomatoes
and not get juicy
all over your lace,

he knows, he has to,
the way they
do him up,
femininize the father.

29 XII 07
This is the first in a series of
the weather
all of this is waiting
for all the rest.
The thing that isn’t weather.

29 XII 07 Palm
The given that is stone. Find on beach
bloodstone kind or Oregon.
Or none.

Once upon another strand
the bullkelp thick around her ankle
still could run,

was that Nausicaa
or your old friend’s wife
in her gloriér days, a feint of white
against the ruddy sand

o how you talk.

Chrysanthemum for you dear sweet
for breakfast eager and the roar
of ocean after.
Which is the lie
the desire
or its denial.
The meaning of life
is never knowing.
Being
   close to the action
means starlight,

spider on the banana,
the crushing smell of
sugar my father hated
when it was the only job
on the docks in Williamsburg
shoveling sugar for Domino.

For we too are tropic,
we ride on creaky bicycles,
we inherit names and noses
from our parents but
we have to smell the city for ourselves.

It stands there
waiting for us,
great stalks of bananas
swinging in the winter wind.

30 December 2007
Brush precious
folderol a farmer
cannot parse his swine—

jumeaux are twins
juments are mares
or some such thing

what do I know about
the parts of horses or
how many faces has

a diamond only one.

30 December 2007
Wanting to know things
again, know them
in their againness

or my own, knowing
is newing, what did you
know when you were new

like that yourself, a little
again fallen into the world,
any of me, all the time,

that tiny part of you called me
again, to be new again
and knowing things

for the first time
again, as it was then
when everything was new again

and everything I saw
was like a sudden
blue jay on new snow.

31 December 2007