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DAYKEEPING

If you wanted to keep the track of the days
you would need strange shoes
you would need to walk on rabbit feet
leaving deer tracks behind you
you would have to march in place
like stalks of August corn stalwart in the field
and a Crow examining you.
You would have to hurry like the shadow of a helicopter
trying to escape from the image its cameraman is broadcasting
of the poor criminal landscape down below
and, and you would have to crumble
like the stucco wall of a ruined warehouse
collapsing under heavy early spring snow under wind.
And above all you would have to speak
Yiddish or a tree.
No new language knows the way.
Then you would get there at last
with the glass in your hand still half full.

16 March 2006
RAPTURE REMEMBERED

Of course it all. Happened again before.
The wheel and the inkwell the ohm the nail
and you made music of it that time, you made *ars*.

Every food is a chemical and some of them dement.
Lettuce and shiitake and watch out for flies.
White is too a color forgive them they know not what they see.

Unless you call a color only what happens
to light in a prism really I mean it.
Unless King David is on your case
and he sings while you busy yourself in the harem

where the young wives show the old wives
so many postcards from so many places
not even God has seen so many
picturesque villages with snow in their eyes.

16 March 2006
THE INVISIBLE AMERICANS OUR HOPE

The invisible Americans
waited in pine woods
in hardwood forest orchards
they had planted

a continent of fruit trees and deer.

They had gotten rid of horses and camels –
horses lead to warfare, and they made peace.
Camels lead to nomads
and they wanted us to settle
down a year or two in quiet
and understand the light, the rock, the stream.

There is so much to understand about the light.

In those days the Day called Quiej came to mean Deer,
large innocent herbivorous quadruped.

They had gotten rid of the horse
and its army, gotten rid of pitched battles.
Now the only fighting was people getting
mad at other people now and then,
once in a while and not by policy
the way we do, the way I also love you.

And then the whitish people came
and wiped out most of the Visible Americans

and brought back the horse. O the horse
is the root of it all, war’s instrument,
braying stallion, Custer and the cavalry.

Then the Day called Quiej began to mean horse again
as it had thousands of years before the Invisible Americans
had cleansed the land of war

and the little Visible Americans shriveled
and got yellow and dusky and hid in the highlands, the desert, the swamp.
And whitish men on their horses, in their Hummers
came after them and come after them.

And all this while the Invisible Americans
are watching, are biding their times, o so much time they have
and we have so little, and the horse
runs on grass, the Hummer runs on gas,
soon they will take the grass and the oil away
then the Invisible Americans will make the land
safe again for the Visible Americans
who will come out of their trailers their condos they milpas
and be nice to each other again
most of the time and they will be
one at a time to each other again
just as I always am to you.

17 March 2006
AFTER WANG WEI

Thank God the mountain’s empty – nobody in sight
but I do hear the sound of men’s voices—

a voice in silence
is like a shadow
fallen on the grass

or as in the deep woods sometimes a ray of
sunlight falls on bright green moss

or is it my own breath?

17 March 2006
DIAGNOSIS

for J.W.

Your falls, ἐφοίνος
long trails tore tarsals
and as for tendo
far tearing. Genetic,
on dit.

Maccabees
in your garden
harassing Philistine kudzu—
do you have that, those?

Tumult of young politics
Amharic customs
—leave out cream—
for the nice devils of the afterlude
toy with your tingle.

Abrupt as a sailing ship
but you say schooner.
Sad as a magazine,

year after year we tremble in the waiting room.

18 March 2006
Hark! It hopes!
But stone—
look “a pebble” in the eye
or study a hole an hour
without regarding what it’s a hole in—

then the mind goes away to its own place
and rests there open to the whole world
not trapped by you anymore

when you look at something else
a long while you let it go.


18 March 2006
POWER OF ATTORNEY

Between testaments compose a codicil
sell a building read a book.
These are dangerous times, muchacha.
The ravine runs through pinewoods even.
Down there a trickle (through dead leaves
on the far side where the hardwoods hang,
dead needles down this from this)
runs like a something I don’t entirely
remember, something that just tickles
the back of the mind as if we suddenly
recognized all at once but one by one
that hey this thing all round us is
air and we can actually breathe in.

18 March 2006
(from notes in Arlington 14 III 06)
AND FINALLY

the unknown man

opens the door and there is spring out there.
The unknown man opens his pocket
and throws some seed out there
then the sheep begin to howl
and the bees dance in their places
humming over a pale rough tawny stone.
Now bees feed on this rough stone
and make honey for me from that
the man says, this unknown man.
Everything is ready for his hour,
the hour at last of the unknown man.

19 March 2006
Every line has to surprise
it’s like watching a road
and seeing a man walking down it
it can’t always be the same man
always has to be a new woman a new man
it’s like waiting for the new man.
Await the necessary, honey.
A man on a dock in wet shoes.
Talmud commentary. Somewhere there is what we call a footnote explaining this very moment.
I look down from the mirror and think about you far away.
How simple the body is we are.
All beings are unique, most unique beings hide in sameness, the flock. But some unique beings are brave beings and dare to be obvious out here in the light.
Of such as these are we. I look back at the mirror and see a man.
The man is laughing at us.

19 March 2006
Feast of Saint Joseph
AN EPISODE OF LATE ROMAN HISTORY

On a day that is *spyi*, a day that is Fire + Water
a day not for important meetings.
What kind of day? But it is the
day Six Tooth, *E* or *Eb*, day
of the road too, day to go.

To go but not to meet,
To meet and not to speak.
To keep the calendar quiet
as the lines in my palm,
call Julia on the newfangled telephone
and tell her to meet me under the Arch
but tell no one. And pretend
when we meet we have never met before.

20 March 2006
THE PRACTICES

call it a religion
the way a child falls off a swing
a linden tree gets planted

Marrano weather
to keep in your heart what won’t fit in the mouth
a ship small leaping on old seas

but this particular tulip died a hero’s death
among the imperial messengers only
one willing to clasp the cold silver hand

cold for all its beauty
or it could be politics too of a refined sort
dusty old finery in her attic

who made you such a faithful companion
milestone on the road to Compostela
eel stew eaten in the company of a hooded man.

20 March 2006
THE SINKING OF THE “TACONIC”

When in the coldest March we saw already
a woodchuck killed on the road we knew
there are two kinds of weather, two
kinds of time. They hibernate, can’t
really be here to die. But dead
he is as we flash by. Two kinds of time,
over and under. Yet in between,
where we sort of are, there is no time at all.

20 March 2006
Caught in the mythology of his lust
she spins from episode to episode.
The Viennese eating house, the bus,
the synagogue, the windowledge,
the spilled communion wine,
the hot tub deep in the woods.
No place exists that is not
beautifully spoiled by his touch.
Their touch. Another language
keeps beginning. ‘Sex’
comes from ‘self’ in ‘exile,’
the soul of one wandering in the other
so that they have to see so many things
and show each other everything they’ve seen
before they let the lights come on again.

21 March 2006
Turn my paltry wishes into prose:
embed the episode in amberish detail.
Wear it. Dangle round your dog’s neck
a little holy medal with an unknown saint,
patron of forgotten information. Lost data.
Dogs are born hungry for a name,
that’s all. The rest they can do themselves.
Don’t interfere. A star knows when to set.
Et cetera. I told you and I tell you
so much but how much sinks in
and where and do I want it to and do
I want to hurry in there with it
to get lost in those sketchy scrub oak woods
politeness makes us call our mind.

21 March 2006
ars poetica

for Anja

If I made the line longer
it might one day reach the end of itself.

21 March 2006
SUNDOWN

What was I thinking
when I was thinking?
What did the sun think
as it sank into the mountain
all that fierce fire
and that hard dark stone
making one soft kiss?

21 March 2006