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Caring, yes, but what of the staying while you care, who dares to drink that glass all the way down and leave the door, stumbling alone out there into the sky? The sky is all there is outside a house, we live in it and it sometimes in us. From it we sometimes dare to live. But who would dare to stay, to stay with care and even stay with love, the way the sky stays where it is, a bright stone we live inside and move, its veins run through us and we try to stay by breathing. Caring. Daring to stay. Will you stay, stay with me (whoever I turn out to be, later, when we both go out and look up to see the sky, the same sky that is all round us, ignorant as we are), stay with me until or putting it another way will you stay until the chemistry has done its work and we are one?

26 October 2006
Clean after angel
left a strange vibration
eastward in the ear

estranged from itself, our thought
became garden
or a large dome in fog
assumed a pearl, something fallen
over the whole city,
resemlances

travel through us
and all of them are stained with truth
a little,
some truth,
imagineing us, us,
as the intersection of
the compared and the comparator,
no other self to spill or spoil.

Or even give.

26 October 2006
Castaways on joy’s ocean
spill sheer sound. Scelsi
rebound from cracked concrete
music-shell of the Social Republic
crumbles in sea-foam. Who
broke the light?

The last house of all
is the senses, please don’t
take my touch away. The panoply
of simple be.

The accurate mistake
we call it,
world without end.

When the license plates were made of cardboard.
When a city was no bigger than my hand touching yours.

27 October 2006
The girl in the expensive pants
looks good in all the maple leaves
sheshuffles through on her way to art,

the camera chaliced in her hands
tells all, she's out to get the world
in dollar-sharp focus, not a hint
of murk or maybe, all of it her own,

the photograph, the whole
season one meek commodity.

27 October 2006
BIRTHDAY OF EVERY CAT IN THIS

You sat then slumped
beside me on the daybed
yawned into my arms.
We explored the afterglow
of who you were.
touched where you were
coming from. Everything
is an explanation.

28 October 2006
But that could be it too.
A spud. Something scorched.
Gold feathers. Or golden.
Tureen. Bread
floats, bread won’t help.

Hope is a crescent, a silvery
lying moon. Dream
of a friend approaching:
 facing you. Full of being here.

28 October 2006
Because I think everything is the god

or: everything I can think
    is the god
    thinking it in me,

would that go even beyond Africa

that moral place?

Grace compels us to choose the good—
and some men call that freedom.

But in the closet the girl curls up
thinking of her distant friend
among the forests of all the clothes,

the space between them is
all she can hope to mean by the world.

28 October 2006
THINKING OF THINKING OF YOU

At times I think of you. And at those times, or sometimes in those times, my whole mind becomes a dark and quiet pool. Through it, your body swims, naked, easy. And when I think of you, this thinking takes the form of seeing and feeling you move through me. Really feeling, as if I were really the water and you really are the human swimmer knowing, being known. Knowing all the water. All of you being known by all of it, the way water is, or does. That’s is how the mind does. Sometimes I feel your flank as it brushes past my face, pressing soft but firm against my mouth like a word I am meant to say.

28 October 2006
It’s not thinking anymore, 
Paul, it’s remembering. 
It isn’t remembering either, 
it is a hard forgetting 
till through the dense fabric 
of all you’ve ever done 
you tear a careful little gap 
to see through 
what you have never seen. 
But you can’t rip your way to it without the cloth.

29 October 2006
LOVE POEM TO A STRANGER

I want to look forward to remembering you.
And if I ever get around to touching you
I want to remember the taste of all the times I didn’t.
When there was nothing at all between us
not even the weather, it could have been spring already,
and the distance itself was part of your skin.

29 October 2006
WHEN IN ROME

Magniloquent otherwise. Or on top. Tusculan Disputations. *If it pleases the gods,* one might become wise.

Or another, passing in the street, would say: I like that coat of yours and you, flourishing in the bewilderment of truth would explain, or complain, but I’m not wearing one, I’m naked, what you see is the shadow of what I felt, words thick as fur jostling in the arena of my skin. You mean it, but the other touching his temple would hurry on.

*

I lay on the sidewalk of that city and listened to the paving stone, it told me all about the Argonauts of such dark streets, the arguments lovers used to refute their desires and philosophers to render valueless their actual experience, sobbing as they quarreled in the stoas of mean protestant chapels, purple with penance, the smell of shadows.

29 October 2006
Shocked by blue heaven
a house went down

you thought it was the wind
it was an idea yielding to its opposite

huge vacuum when thought's withdrawn.

A door. As I have tried to tell you
the law is. But you wouldn't listen –

you thought pleasure was something else.
It never is. It is only this, only ever

this. Pleasure is this.

29 October 2006
Things coming back
take a while to come back to themselves

like a red straw floating in a milk pail
the way is long

the lepers in the rows of corn
hide from the sun

they are singing about the long way
the long life of things

the strange sad life of time and language and need

sometimes I have heard foxes
shouting at nightfall in the cornfield

or just beyond it
where the trees shrink away from me year after year.

30 October 2006
But how could a line ever be long enough to get there,  
tell me that, you Holy Trinity geometer,  
you mother of analysis, you hegemon of hope?

There is nowhere that properly speaking could be called ‘else’  
extcept where this very line is not.  
And this line is as you see is everywhere

along with you seeing it and me whispering into the narthex of your ear  
(my excuse to breathe in the linden and oak moss of your hair)  
all the destinations of the minute hand one by one

without ever committing a single act of that adultery called “giving you a  
moment’s peace.”

30 October 2006
Now the twenty-first letter of the Name has been spoken. The letter is c, shin, which some understand as meaning ‘tooth.’ But this kind of tooth is like the Dent du Midi, the great mountain peak called the Tooth of the South, which is also the tooth of noon. In Chinese, the same character (squared off, made rigorously asymmetrical) is shan, a mountain. The tooth of earth that bites into the sky.

This is the year’s work that lies before you: to be earth and hard, to be wide open to the sky. “The Kingdom of heaven is taken by violence,” it says in Rabbi Jesus’s workbook. This is the year to work the book, to beat the sky. To bite heaven.

30 October 2006
But was I the sign of another,
my whole being just a sign
and never a signified?

Shut up, I helped him,
there are no signs.
Except that the Long Body writes,
that is the body of your being in the world a long time,
a cipher.

But can my cipher be read?
Enough to be grass. Or an amazement
plucking at the hem
of passing saints and motorists.
Somebody knows you, somebody
even cares – but you,
you don't have to find them or name them, see?

He saw not
neither did he spin
nor understood
the purple river that runs in him
and gives such ardor to his excited face

was grace. Time is just the skin of him.

31 October 2006
When is thinking about a thing the same as doing something else? When does the low light dance club lose its roof to a high wind and let the snubnosed sky probe in the way it does on other planets why not here? Forgive me, I have been awake since sleep.

Some other thing, I mean, not the one you keep thinking about all the time, in blue satin and across the room, a plastic glass, a flute with nobody playing it and still the wee hours fill up with music, how? Dunking for apples. Closing your eyes. Not here. Another order of life altogether on another substrate system just like you but far away. A little tipsy but present if not presentable. Why not? A gloom settles over the permanent café. Night has enough work to do without using it to make yourself glum. Find an old map and follow it. The maple tree will help you. The sun is always behind the wall. Climb. Over the parapet you’ll see the one you mean.

31 October 2006
Any map
shows the way

that’s what’s so
hard to remember

following the
delicate lovely blue veins

Not one of them
ever gets there

but every
map shows the way.

31 October 2006
There are too many stars in the sky
when I was young there were only a few

and the great hazy Milky Way ran right across
clear as a word on paper

but now the Way is weaker, its stars have left the stream
and stand around, dangerous loners looking down on us

everything is vaguer up there except for them
those dozens and dozens of individuals who

have broken free from their old constellations
no more bears no more altars no more scales

just fierce white eyes staring me down.

31 October 2006