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## PLAY ONE

Man in overcoat sitting at bare table.  
On the table a vase of flowers dead and dying.

15 December 2006

## 8. K.246 “Lützow”

Straw. We always are.  
We always see  
flowers in winter  
made, colored with color  
by a will to see.

I speak this language too,  
I am actually only an afterthought of it,

a lyric footnote  
to what everybody else said

a girl dancing by himself  
a bird frowning at the sea

that proves nothing  
just as touching you  
proves nothing but that I have hands

But why do I always hurry, feel hurried,  
why is such a quick animal  
hunting all through me for the next thing to do?  
Is it prey, cheetah, or the moon  
you're after, little wolf?

The hard thing to remember is  
we're all born in the same year

tourists grin on the cathedral steps  
their camera, digital, are smaller now,  
childlike pleasures, I don't mind so much  
the delicate jabber of English and Japanese

I have my own shadows to herd along the dusty road  
my own language I'm trying to forget

the sun a cellphone ringing in my eyes.

II.

Or not see so much:  
a box, a box he brought in  
to show the class, empty,

“my mouth a disconnect,” he said,  
“if I can get the next trick new  
I think the war will end”

but I’m not sure his kind of war  
has even begun, not yet at least,  
I sympathize with his mistake,

I took my skin for a flag once,  
I imagined that what I felt was good for you  
and you needed news of it pronto

and I did. Now he  
feels that way too but without the feeling.  
Brings the community a box.

A box is to put things in.  
Things you don’t have and maybe don’t even want.  
But those things also need a box to call their own.

Is there a war we really need?  
Is there a circle with a cube inside it  
a pair of dice with no spots

a man carrying nothing in his hands but  
thinking or supposing the space between them  
is a box, or space enough, or a man can carry

space with him wherever he goes  
and a box he tells us  
a box is just anything at all that waits.

III.

I know you now.

--This same road, a year ago.

I know.

--You weren't sure about me then.

And now.

--And now not either or not yet?

I think I do, I think we'll go  
along the road a bit.

--Just as we did.

It's strange to think that two people could walk  
along a road and finally reach some city.

--It is strange. But why is it strange?

The blossoms, some pink, some white in the chestnut trees?

--Or their shadows. Why do we walk in shadow?

Why are we walking at all? Didn't we once  
have the convenience of conveyance, wheeled?

--Wheels don't work anymore.

Wind, there's wind.

--Always on this road there's wind.

You see to know much more about this than I do. Have you been  
this way many times before?

-- [Hums.]

Am I supposed to recognize that tune?

--I don't know about 'supposed.' I sang it to you last time. That's all we  
know.

17 December 2006

## 9. K.271 “Jeunehomme”

The things the things  
the things one knows  
and every tune is stored  
and every new thing comes home

your father's shadow  
on your mother's door

the things  
live in a world  
a world is signs is omens  
an omen is the world talking about itself  
and afraid, a sign of a thinking thing

the things know how to sing  
the things know how to dance in dreams  
the things are elsewhere when we wake

but the things are where we are  
they are the angels

a thing is an angel

we move among them while they stand

thoughts embody'd  
and here on this empty road  
a man is walking the familiar  
the straight lines of his childhood  
to taste the shadow of where he's been

to breathe things in  
and make them breathe

the things that are his silent guardians  
they keep watch  
he feels them in his tears  
when the sight of a cracked plate  
or a new brown paper bag  
not yet unfolded at the grocery

can make him full with a feeling  
he can't find any label for,  
not joy not grief, a strange  
*intensity of now,*

a thing

is always now  
and when you've lost a thing  
(I've lost my golden ring)  
you've lost your now

nowless then go sing  
anytime you like  
a lost boy on a lost road  
looking for a lost thing  
he'll never find  
because a thing is now  
and only here.

Saint Seraphim of Sarov  
who kept his monks and nuns apart  
so each could seek the lostness of the other  
and find and find,  
patron of those who seek lost things  
(I found my ring)  
Saint Seraphim pray for him  
this little boy this little me

I will throw all my other things  
and watch where they fall  
and follow as well as I can  
into the wilderness they show  
by vanishing, and I will go there  
and I will know, and knowing  
will be the lost lost thing.

II.

River that comes over the hill as mist  
river that runs me, river of no remember,  
all that is known about you is your passing,

no hint of where you're from or where to go,  
river that is just the animal of passing,

slow as the sun, slow even as the darkness

river we are seldom permitted to see  
but sometimes stand on the mulchy shore  
watching driftwood, the geese wild or resident,

the puzzling transactions of objects being moved  
by something that looks like a republic of intentions  
but no one I can stop and talk to, but you,

the whole of you, endure the flab of my address  
all of us, brimming over with our ideas,  
our ontologic jabber, river, listen one more time to me

river who swept Kant away along the shallow sea  
river whose main cargo is the summer stars  
meek reflections of the uneasy mind,

Tu Fu's river, river of pine green ornaments  
that all are water, that all run through the hands,  
river it is dangerous to understand

but I'm trying, I'm living beside you year after year  
(we live among signs and portents, we dream  
only what the river brings to mind) and sometimes rarely

I step down to the actual water, the water that is you  
and is not you at all, and I touch it with my toes  
to see if I still know how to feel,

river that tells me only confusion can be beautiful,  
river of no certainty, a tuning fork is struck,  
the hum of whom, to stay or go, river of I know.

III.

No help for the drowning man  
but go deeper.  
No help for the hand  
but to touch more.

The steeple is falling  
the street is full  
this color bird

flies through the ground

the beggars run down the street  
sailors carry flower girls around  
it's all the way it was in books  
when you could read

Gold coins roll out of roses  
frightened children hate the sound of words  
a word is only to tell them what to do  
run away, the light  
is disobedient, it shows  
more than it's supposed, the line  
runs through the town, the circus horses  
prance along the railway track  
only the children are afraid. Always afraid:

run faster. Stop and take a breath.  
Go through your pockets. Raisins.  
Dates. Stones. Enough to go on,  
the forest is close now, frost comes soon,  
people live inside everything,  
people nobody has ever seen,

there is always somewhere else,  
there isn't always only here,

only the dried fruit in your pocket  
the little stones to keep you company  
take them out and name them  
and they will be your little soldiers

but even they keep telling you what to do.  
To be is to be told.

Sometimes you sing, sometimes you get  
so angry you don't even want to breathe.  
You want to disobey, just disobey,  
then you look at the stone again  
and it still tell you freedom comes from doing this  
whatever it says. Freedom is being here.  
You don't believe a word of it, all you want  
is to get away, away and disobey. Then

break free, run away, and learn to disobey  
this palpitating Torah of the heart.

17 December 2006

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Under the houses  
dark snakes mating—  
another country,  
settlement, relief  
of not here.

                  She bent  
to touch one  
then drew back  
unafraid. Who?  
A voice I knew  
medium-well,  
a quick mysterium,  
alchemists everywhere I

18 December 2006

## II. K.413

Hold a curl. Curve.  
Over the room is room around me.  
Roof. A word?

A word is a knife with no bread.

Push harder at the missing door.  
Milk. She's always

on time I'm always late

trip the marble steps  
weather means danger

carved hillside  
images in rock  
images are the only treasure

the carvings are huge rooms  
each one a different shape

a telling

each one empty

a treasure is something waiting for you  
you have to plug yourself into its sense of space  
to seize the treasure and sail home

sail, veil, no home, no treasure  
but the vast empty rooms  
each room a different shape

shape is our treasure

you sashay past you empty me  
each me a different you

shape? pleasure,  
pronounced as in Oklahoma



is getting further and further away all the time  
and we are stars too evidently goodbye goodbye  
Big Bang and all that babble  
about the infinite recedingness of the universe  
everything departing everything rushing everywhere  
and everywhere is just away

away from me and not so long ago and the city not far  
everything exists to keep people apart  
who otherwise would fall into each other  
and make a bed of everything

when everything is supposed to be busy with its Father's business  
carrying everything else so far away

and then I looked down  
at the cold little stream runs past my house  
and saw a little fish hurrying there too.

I miss you. But the French say  
*you are missing from me.*  
So when we meet some day  
and ask who's to blame  
let's hold hands and blame the little fishes.  
Improper plural. *Tu me manques.* Blame language.

III.

Flags fly under water

cobblers work frantic for the emperor  
and everything changes.  
This music is about everything,  
the everything that changes

and for once has something to say  
about that most vexed agent  
everybody. It says: beneath  
the ocean another earth is waiting

beyond the sky another sky is breeding.  
What we use up will be replaced  
and somebody else will use it up—

how beautiful the wet flags of vanished kingdoms,  
how beautiful a king is  
when he is all power but has none  
when he rides in the tumbrel to the guillotine  
or when a queen rules a continent she has never seen  
armyless, and with her smile alone—

take back my words  
from politics and money,  
let it be  
that when I speak  
beneath my word  
another word is waiting

and when I breathe  
another's breath is speaking.

18 December 2006

## PLAY TWO

A man, any man no longer a boy, is sitting at a bare wooden table with a vase of dead and dying flowers on it, pale ones, whitish, mauve, pale corn, whatever.

The man no longer a boy is wearing a long overcoat. He sits with his right profile visible to the audience, he leans on the table, his left forearm resting along the edge.

He is cold. He is thinking: I am cold.

He is also thinking: when I was young I say like this too.

There have in fact been many times over the years that he has sat this way.

Only the flowers are different.

18 December 2006

= = = = =

What do you do  
with what's in the mind  
before the music comes?

*the smell of a shadow*  
it said when I was quiet

or a piece of bread.  
Enough a morning.

19 December 2006

## 12. K.414

In middle of things  
the hunt  
methodical a kind  
of joyous plodding

hunt.  
There is a king in your pocket  
a moon on your back

and already it's dawn.  
Who knows you?

Not what I see but what it makes me seen  
or to have been seen, silently hailed,  
two persons passing in and out of phase,  
their shadows touch –

marvelous marriage!

tell me all  
things lying in dead leaves  
full of life, is that

is that what you were getting at  
in a year of your life

the hunters stolid through the woods  
their white hounds distracted  
easily by truffles, bitches  
mostly, under the leaf mould, under  
such oaks by which a stag once bled

bratchet to call such dogs  
and they are chosen out  
to bark or bell in tune,

harmony animals

glisten of their teeth,  
what are they after,  
this posse, so quiet?

No bear no boar no deer  
and the trees stand close  
marshaled it is no thrill  
to gallop through

still they keep coming  
could they be after me  
and if they are or do  
who is this me supposed to be?

I look down and count my legs  
I look up and count the sun

timeless error to be me  
they're taking their time about it  
but never stop  
I pray to them but the trees absorb all sound

the king's out of my pocket now  
running for his life

woodpecker, mountain stream, campfire ashes cold.

II.

Not so never here

hands cupped around your face  
skull ears

your hear their skin

your lips move slowly  
you followed the finger  
pointing words out in a book

bright clean fingernail  
shows your breath where to go

pronounce this sentence

then try to remember it  
the name of the one you need  
is hidden inside it

the one you need to need

inside the sound of what you see

I have given it all to you  
her name her hawk  
her tower her little yellow car

she who once in Anatolia  
was the mistress of such beasts  
lives near you now

now it is squirrel only or flying  
fox and bat because you  
are only who you are at night

and here the sun comes over the summerhouse  
he must have been the loneliest man who ever lived  
so hard he had to work to say the simplest thing

I hear you    you belong to me

but with no you and no me  
the shadows would still come crashing through the trees

it goes on without me

to be wonderful the only

III.

it has no heart here  
it locked it in a golden chest  
in a tired garden

story books tell what giants do  
and smaller monsters like me and you

what happens inside the earth  
and there too the giants hide their wits  
and we hide our desires

come out come out  
empty head with ruby rattling in it  
word moving

and let the new religion come  
sunbreak over little hill  
we speak another language here

they are resplendent  
in their silken mistakes

heirloom vocabularies  
lady I would be a word in your mouth  
he said and no other commodity  
be our community

or a phone call from the weather  
just the sound of the wind  
breathing when you answer

just the sound of sun.

And in the backyard you can hear the cloud.

19 December 2006