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THE APPETITE

Death is hungry this year,

tsunami, and the passing
of great princes
in their divers degrees,

Creeley laureates, Rainier
of the Riviera, in Rome
the dying Pope.

Each in his degree
conspicuous, Terri Schiavo
famous for her death
alone,
 celebrities.

A good time to bow my head
hide in my collar
and make no noise,
let death's heat-seeking vehicle
pass quietly overhead.

1 April 2005

BETWEEN VARDA AND BURBERRY

An octopus
walks on two arms
up Spring Street
its other six arms
wrapped around
its monstrous head
to efface the sun

Water of shadow
we walk below

dark pilgrims
trying to find
a quiet land

But land is light
light and far
away where
the same sun
is slipping now
down into Jersey.

1 April 2005
New York

Two found texts:

Hill questionable (shin)

(from the ESPN crawler)

*

Je m'axe sur toi

(Larousse)

=====

Setting out to celebrate a departure
silence round the death house

nobody speaks any names at all
nobody says the name of the dying one

let one sit quietly beside one
letting one go.

Let there be a house
into which one comes to go

let there be one quiet one
to say what has never been said.

Candles quenched. Gold
of its own light gleaming.

Let the windows stay open
till the sky is closed.

2 April 2005

=====

Given rain
and green shoots and cold
one feeds the birds
and calls it spring

one breathes a longer
song, long urgent
meditative lines loop
over the ease of music

and drag us with it
to a fiercer place.
Faced with interminable
knowing, like a man

falling down a flight
of stairs conscious
helpless flexes
the few muscles he can

control. from the beginning
of the world till now
always and vainly
trying to help.

2 April 2004

=====

securus iudicat – Augustine

People will get around to knowing.
They too are a kind of weather,
snow squalls and bonny days, wind
common, floods frequent. People
are so weak for the work entrusted
to the, to carry it, consciousness.
The Gospel blind man saw trees walk,
I see men and women as houses
moving, temples, godowns, garages—
all of us have roofs and cellars,
oubliettes, attic over attic and then
so many rooms. Why people
are so happy when they dream a new
doorway in the wall, a new room
in their house, a corridor to mystery.
Because all we are is conscious
constructions moving around.
So few rooms we usually inhabit,
painting and papering the same suite
while empty hallways of them spread
out from us through the world,
the wind in them alive, shadows
hurrying, all of it waiting, stirring.
Darkly afoot. That's how people are.

3 April 2005

“I am [...] parasangs inside you”

I wrote fifty years ago, I forget the number,
nine I think, I forget how long a parasang
is compared with a verst or a kilometer,
I'm not sure I knew even then but it was true,
I was in you, it still is, the numbers
always change, that's what numbers do,
the measures give way to one another
but I am always some number of some measure
inside you. Inches and miles. For then
I was a Persian and a Celt, a Greek,
Chinese, finally came home. A man
has no nationality when he's at home.
I'm still there, inside you, here, speaking
Youandmese, the oldest language
hardest of them all to learn or to forget.

3 April 2005

DAYLIGHT SAVED

Time ruse, rush
past so fast this week
it burns my cheek

I can't shave I sit
and watch the mild
grass grow, hold
against the hurtle

blue stars of new squills.

3 April 2005

=====

Being sure
is like being short

a shout
outside a locked door

no one hears
cares

your certainty
gets into the wood

runs
along the grain

coffee in a napkin
sopping it

now it sounds
like us again

your child your car
your flashlight

falls
from the rowboat

gleams ten
feet down

longer
than I thought it could.

4 April 2005

=====

Or *if* a flower
then such a tribe
as Snorri posited
hurrying
out of Russia
fit to be gods
of all the islands,

id lands,
Hecla and taboo.

Today on this shale outcrop
not one trace of snow at last
after the rains

you don't need to know
what day it is
only the gods need that

what you need is the time of day
the shadow across the piazza

Mary Henderson's
dog's dead

and the pope in Saint Peter.

4 April 2005

=====

Cast about

to guess more
unspell the sudden hyacinths
around the dead Achilles

the sky keeps healing
no matter what the cities do

hyacinths and daffodils
in front of Penn Station

nothing changes.

4 April 2005

=====

Night. Berlioz.
Aeneas must Rome

what scalene triangle
must I ascend

pyramidless triremeless
romeless marenostromless

a stucco ceiling cunning
worked with divinities

cupids and cupidesses
their chubby fesses
the last Rights of Man.

For we have sung our way
beyond politics

beyond liberty.

4 April 2005

=====

Asking to become
is a way of not
being here at all.

4 IV 05

=====

Philosophers,
of what are you citizens

what pilgrim syntax
takes you so far from

that girl in the market
who needs only you?

4 April 2005

=====

Caught looking in the mirror
I can only explain
I was waiting for me to appear.

4 IV 05

=====

Halt meant lame
aim meant miss
the obvious and let
arrows make their own way
we read as stars

coursing the night.
Waterfalls of dark guesses
bring me to you.

I thought a white birch tree
was growing at your door
but it was my own bare arm
raised to shield us both
from what will never come.

4 April 2005

=====

I am a heretic of which
in sun
all the meanings
the gods are in the laps

elm twig, small y
grown out of big y

broken at my feet.

5 April 2005

=====

I forgot to answer
the phone
it sounded
like a natural thing

not far from a bird
happening overhead
and me too comfortable
to bother looking up

it fits the sky
perfectly without me
it needs nothing
beyond its cry

I would have thought
if I had been thinking
but I was forgetting
letting it pass.

5 April 2005

=====

speaking in vein

the blood path
a simple word
runs

reach you, only you
it is all about
you tiresomely red

5 April 2005

=====

Trying to measure
use an old rope
no marks but the weave

use a hollow stone
formed that way: it
holds the right amount

it always will, things
do. Trying to say something
let your breath

out to play,
see what she says,
this little god who runs your house.

6 April 2005

