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AS IF THIS ONE MORNING EVERYTHING CHANGED

How could this be more or less than one morning? Strike “one.”

How do I, how does anyone, achieve certainty that somewhere something is not changed, whether by accident, neglect of will, or through possessing a nature impervious to change?

Is there such a nature?

If so, who or what has it?

If not, why introduce consideration of it here? Don’t you know?

The word ‘changed,’ thanks to ending in that archiphoneme D that expresses in so many languages (Germanic, Tibeto-Burman, Latin) what Wittgenstein once called pastness, indicates that the changing is already finished, done with. No more change in the changing. But isn’t change an unending thing, a process not a deed?

Revise. (Revision is change.) Hide instead in a novelist’s stratagem:

as if this morning most things seemed changed

But that sentence expresses seem twice. Strike ‘as if.’

this morning things seemed changed
That’s a pretty dull sentence now.

And we have to ask, whenever change is introduced, so as to be clear: changed from what to what? From itself to something else (like frogs and princes)? From itself to some other phase of itself (like Rip Van Winkle, or water and ice)?

And to whom does this change, assuming it really has occurred or is occurring, now seem?

If you don’t know, don’t go there. Say a name or pronoun. Or strike ‘seem.’

**things change**

Which is safe, dull, true. And slightly annoying to be told. Full of hope (for cure, improvement). Full of menace (for failure, dilapidation, relapse).

Maybe you have, or there is, nothing to say about everything.

Maybe you have nothing to say about things.

Or change.

Do you have something to say about this morning?
Yes. What about my feeling. I looked out the window. Fog, rain, a woman walks downhill, I can feel her bones ache. The sea is too quiet, not a sound of waves. How do I feel? I feel as if everything has changed in the night. But I don’t know how, or why, or in what direction, or what it means, or what will come of it. What comes of my feeling. I write it down. You give me grief. I feel displeased with certain friends. But won’t let myself know who – but whoever they are, I don’t want to be friends with them anymore. That’s a change, isn’t it? And a feeling. A feeling about feeling changed. We don’t have to go through every permutation, do we? Or we have to go through it, maybe, every one, but we don’t have to tell you so, do we? You don’t like to be told. At least not so much. We don’t have to account for everything, do we, don’t have to count everything, mention by name everything that has changed and everything that has stayed the same, if anything has. If anything has changed. Maybe the bones I feel aching are my own. Raw cold weather, and a clever wind. Isn’t memory just a broken bone ill-healed on such a day? Any day. Isn’t the new light enough to warrant Morning! Morning! Do I have to know what makes it new? And if I do, do I have to tell you?

Maybe I don’t want to tell you or anybody what has changed. Maybe my feelings are an important secret that should be kept hidden in the leg of my pants where it could warm my right knee. Maybe all I knew anyhow was skin, and my so-called friends just shadows cast on my skin.

17 June 2005, Cuttyhunk
The sea a constant offering
and those who live in sight of it
can offer and offer every changeful
glimpse of it, offer the obvious blue
of it, offer the slaty winter of a summer
storm, offer the stone of it, offer
the change itself, because of all
things true to human life change
is truest and what else do we
really have to offer or to give?

17 June 2005, Cuttyhunk
KREUTZER SONATA

how small my mind is
under big music
like a snake hiding in a hedge
aligning with branches
hidden in the shape of things

17 June 2005, Cuttyhunk
but what could happen
could a stone do it?
nothing but what we think
is anything to think
bounce off the wall
fall to the center
of the room now be a chair

17 VI 05
to say something easy
never thought
to be mute out loud
and sing inside wood

crack the rock and see
crack the sea and say

17 VI 05
INSELF

Inself the order

18 June
Two men standing on the sea
there seems to be a boat beneath them
a man standing on the sea
is a fisher man
a man inveigling alien
presences in an unseen realm
getting them to rise to him

18 June
Wanting to give pleasure
what more is there in quiver
but desire, to strike
and vary, to touch
what turns target, moving,
still, to arrive in that one’s
chamber or with that one ascend
rocks of the sacred mountain
or this meek grassy headland
over the unstable eternal

and be the sea gull land crow
the air both belong to
belongs to you and be
all round inside no
end to the giving
one gives by taking.

18 June 2005, Cuttyhunk
If you were a person
would you hate to be described?
Would it be morning or the first day?

How many words can you hold in your hands
without forgetting even one?
Suppose I told you something about your life—
would that make you a person
and what would it make me?

Say after me: “I hear the sea,
the sea and some black birds,
nothing else. It must be the first day.”

Now tell me what to repeat.
“I hate the sea.” Slowly
the day turns into language.
You slap your child and feel guilty.
You open the door and think:
“There is so much wood in the world,
why bother?” But you do.

Usually walking with another.
Usually having a bone. A bone
you find reassuring, like a hymn
From Greenland’s Icy Mountains
or at Yule a tipsy misunderstanding
about God. What do Protestants
believe? But now
I can’t follow what you’re saying.

I admit it. I was trying to keep
the candle from going out so I dropped
some of the vocabulary you handed me.
I was trying to be helpful, the sun’s
cheerful light stays up in heaven
doesn’t get down to the sea. I’m cold.
And you’re right – I know nothing
about the sea. But you’re only mad
because you slapped your only son
and now which way can you turn to feel
like nobody again, when you were glad?
Judgment Day comes down from the wall
behind the altar and goes off in your chest.

18 June 2005
Cuttyhunk
THE LAST I SOMEWHAT AM

you cant have the body without the mind
why Henry James is all about sex
the mental landscape before, around
any possible act, intimate.

Caressing the sea.
Pushing the news
out of your mind.
Polishing the air
Taking revenge on the wind.
No, marrying it,
sneezing sunlight often.

White-throated sparrow puffed against the cold.
Can’t hear with the.
Infinite measure
strong words
contradictio.
Dante’s was called divine because.
Never knew if B meant the text was
or the meaning was
or God’s a fool and all his world is
born in lunacy
adjectives never say what they really mean
leave Leiris and a girl alone in a book.

Dangers of Africa.
Titles on the march towards books.
Regent Street remembering Orchard
where it becomes Baker and the garden
of the queen slides into view and then
we turn around and walk
to Marble Arch through a fog of names
nothing clean, kitsch of the actual
from which the name rescues

grass grows over your shoes
samphire pickerel

Suburban Mall: the abomination of the market place standing in desolation.
Outside the Town there is no salvation,
outside the Town no one will be saved.
Can’t hear for the.
If I opened the window I would hear the sea
then everything would go backwards

fold the old
comforter quilt over with shavings of cedar
stored against the miracles of decay
early man goes fishing
a diffident diorama walking down the hill
will the hydrangea bloom in time
our month is up on Thursday
“bat balk”
Sunday work to be done
God is a thing a fisherman never talks about
alone on the.

An island is its own religion.
Bring down the striped towel for the rocky beach
o where has winter put our sand
away away where time’s things are

asthmatic heave of the sea today
for all the sparkle
fades, the shadow of my hand
vanishes from the writing paper

because of a light eight minutes away
or a little cloud *nuvolett*a
what could B be thinking?
How many cc’s in courage?
Midnight golf cart derby lightless foam
and then he woke like an impoverished aristocrat
in *The Golden Bowl* promising to tell
the truth if only there were a truth to tell
if the sun went out
it would take us eight minutes to notice
sometimes when the heart goes out
it takes a terrible time longer

only Africa would know
only the great blue dream
only the hand’s shadow coming and going
weaving

over the years I find I can’t keep interested in plots
movies are more like looking out the window
and books are stained glass light to bathe in

strangers on pretty streets

to be free from plots
and have only language

to be free from plots is to be free from my own story
free of my fate
overcome the overman
destiny
language is a way of sitting still
language goes there and does it
and you have blood on your hands at the end of the sentence
language meditates
the lapdog burrows through the lap
the sky never gets a minute off

never for a moment stop perceiving
and even the stone has something to say
paperweight
weigh my meaning down
give some gravity
to the sunlight’s laughter
and my gull greed
soars off the earth

paperweight
hold the music down
can’t hear with the
such papers rustling in the night
put a seal on every one
then press into the wax
your ancestor’s signet ring
you too belong to somebody else

you too are part of the plot
the insolent unfoldings of the actual.

Don’t prompt me
I know the answer
it’s Africa isn’t it
the incontinent dark

come to claim me
the cloud is everywhere
but where it could shield me
from the endless sun

can’t
-off winter canyoning
clamor of parsimony
costs too much, no
bats on the island and no crows

the shadow comes and goes
it’s almost enough to eat

grim silence of the ear
determin’d dar’d & done

I speak
my peace.

19 June 2005
Cuttyhunk
EXPLANATIONS

The current is not something the sea knows
it knows the sea. Joy
runs through a tender bone
only.

A child three
years old holds
a fishing rod and does not see
the death it dangles.

“Fish feel no pain.” “Fish never die,
even when you eat them, something
of them swims away
and leaves the bones and fins,
fish fly like sunrays back to the sky
or wherever the sea comes from,”
he thinks, putting together
all he has been told.
The explanations people give
for everything.

Where is my joy
now? Why have I turned
away from what I never knew I faced?
The Ahab turn. So young to turn.
The leg slowly turns to wood.
The body *from the Sun*. The sign:
to feel love yet cause pain.

The unintentional, the coarse,
the accident, the dumb. In England
as I slept the woods were green
the animals were talking again.
To be a child is not to know
how words strike home.
I want to believe.
I want to be slow as it is.

Maybe even to be accurate
the way it is. Shadows
have no life of their own
until the night time comes
and meanings falter.
Then I hold the simple rod again
and change the sea. The wood
enchants itself to be.
Then my arms hold everyone again
and no one turns away from the word.

20 June 2005, Cuttyhunk
We chose this pain we might unchoose.
Nobody nailed us to the sea, nobody said
Live with this man or die, nobody said
You are only what you do – no other mercy.
Turbulence of children running down the halls,
Their words all being and no meaning,
A word’s what excitement makes mouths do,
Nobody makes you listen. Whorled organs
Beside your forehead are your fears
Left and right. Then left again into the dark.

20 June 2005
Cuttyhunk