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= = = = =

Who knows when who was

–always on retreat

*isola*

her lips at my ear

reciting–

from island to island

being noble and vague

seeking through nobility alone

a silence that would speak to me

the way her breath did

ever after, no matter what words

an ear is not for hearing

them, it is to feel

the birdsong of the other

breath

near, near

an island is the ocean's ear

to wind as many possible roads

out of sight of one another

into the smallest longest labyrinth.

21 June 2005,

Cuttyhunk

## LINGUIÇA

Eat sausage by the sea the special kind  
that way the empire (all of you) is soon lost  
the government dissolves in sea foam

we are who we are and that's the end  
rebels came here and calmed down  
pregnancy popular on the island and clamming

after a while we will all speak  
another language a certain number  
of gardens a hidden clock buried in my ear.

21 June 2005

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

East inaugurates the sea gods  
always more than one

when we come to speak  
of deity only we

can think no higher number.

21 VI 05, Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

To be one near to the other  
side of or run down hill  
a face is a mother only  
isn't envelope old fashioned  
archaic idea of thing inside  
other thing as if the world  
made sense and all you had to do

\*

is fit the pieces together  
are you create to solve?  
mentioning superior cameras  
suck the light out of things  
a sea is not the same  
a sea is not the same  
northern harrier common  
Euxine to ward off storms  
o names you patent medicines.

21 June 2005, Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

What miracle do you believe  
in weather as an oracle? the sun  
of crime the moon of esperance  
cocktail waitress tenderfoot galoot  
mind us old tropes and tropics  
these 29 palms these Vague Losses?

Sun on pen nib the dazzle  
is pure gold whate'er the metal be  
I'm speaking the old language now  
the *fortitude* chapel and coven  
brick and rowan, and in the thicket  
one hare looks out – see,  
these plenitudes are people  
strutting around the place like trees  
in a wilderness, they leave shadows  
half permanent on the paper  
of their passage, a beast like me

can read the ground. Follow  
you around. The world's a cock-tease  
when you look at her, a fallen  
bell beneath its tower  
when you look away, still hear  
the bong of her fall all through the dell

“Resound.” Be spiritual,  
let the wind up in, bindweed,  
samphire, orient vetiver  
all smell and no cigar.

Then smoking seats used to be  
the balcony where lovers tangled,  
the emperor used to raise thick eels.

The patriarchs sacrificed kids and lambs,  
the first poets quarreled with the breeze.

And you still think math explains things?  
It can't even explain itself, no more  
than music can. We are mute to its clamor  
the way it wants us to be.  
So much for history. The argument  
from design finds no design.  
If you tell me thinking is just  
molecules misbehaving in a thunderstorm  
I'll say I don't know French,  
or just enough to smile at the waiter  
and trick him into serving me some tripe.  
Girls don't like it. Why. It reminds them  
too much of their father's hands  
gluey with abstinence and yearning and laws.  
So I have to eat alone tonight  
the world propped up in front of me

like the daily paper a few days late.

Hurry tomorrow. Join me, be my dessert.

Later we'll walk by the water

where the harbor is full of pirate tankers,

green ruffians trying to put the oil back in the ground.

22 June 2005

Cuttyhunk

**One keeps turning into two.**

What can you do  
rebuke the counting numbers  
turn them into amber  
chrysoprase jadeite mercury  
always trying to keep  
their hands on everything.  
Leaves on the trees, how many?  
Chestnut flowers over Zurich.  
Getting close to Frobenius,  
the altar of diffusion  
from which all culture spread –  
bend of the Niger, grasslands,  
heartlands, number by number  
imagining the world.

For numbers are the flowers in desert countries.  
What are you carrying?  
Why do I love thee?  
Is it taxes? Plaintiffs,  
hearts at work  
beneath the mousseline de soie?

And what is that anyway?  
How can a woman wear so many words?

22 June 2005 Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

Whale road they cried  
the pale hair of her  
they had come so far  
to see the wind blow

sand seawrack a blue  
mussel in kelp clutched  
does the house hold its man  
or the ship make us go?

who could resist the road  
herself at the end of it  
every object it attracts  
the magnet means

then they were here  
with their tune and their town  
and we were owned by  
what we had brought to us.

22 June 2005

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

If I let this happen it will always happen  
take away the shadow from the tower  
let the traveler forget all he has seen—  
the dogs barking, the women fainting,

then where do the famous roses grow,  
named ones, Gloire de Dijon, for instance,  
of Emma Goldman – and the hortensia  
waiting for its baron's silk lapel,

how the sky imitates that flower,  
everything imitates something else  
as if no one could bear the discomfort of being.  
*Rang*, a self, perhaps one's own.

23 June 2005

Cuttyhunk

## TORCH OF MORNING

fishermen stuck in sun glare  
backs to it of course  
and these are the sportsmen  
who borrow the sea for the weekend

and carry a few lives home—  
it is these men we see stand tall  
in the skinny motor skiffs  
prowling for *the place*

-- the right look of water,  
the reputation of a reef,  
ancient rumor of deaths galore  
nearby in the not harmless

mouths deep down there  
preying on the predators.  
Most of what they contrive to catch  
goes to the gulls.

23 June 2005

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

Introduce alien life forms.

Call this one 'dog' and this one 'man'  
then let them loose at the edge of the woods.

Where is everything? they'll think  
and move about in different ways to find.

Ardor. Telescope of time,  
a reek of chlorine along the beach.  
I myself fell among the rocks and lay.  
Something other than this. Something other than this.

23 June 2005

Cuttyhunk

= = = = =

I become a word  
a word gets said  
the sound of it fades

\*

A word I am  
made up of letters  
any child can draw,  
tear me into stars.

23 June 2005  
Massachusetts

= = = = =

Being in the place of the place  
and time's own time  
and a crow

a crow right over me  
hello hello  
(no crows on the island)

a crow now  
why be a place  
there are no crows

The crows of time  
make me home  
home = here

the place speaks.

\*

This has been my speaking place for forty years.

Rostrum forest,

Sibyl's maple's leaves and oak's

in season dry to spell my alphabets

this was a good place to listen to

and a girl.

24 June 2005

Lindenwood

CSARDAS

or like it, a hop  
among havers

while the mere look in  
through shut window  
to see such

prances their  
whole lives never  
the like of this

*We are the sand*  
they think  
*& they are the hourglass,*

*our secret is Again.*

24 June 2005

## THE SERVER

the alternate ultimate:

a pirate ship

full of blondes *tu sais*

a movie screen for a mainsail

and the genoa is an intimate remark

the wind fills

track ocean tragedy-less

past – they still have thighs

cutlasses slim cheroots

they puff like Delhi merchants

and they don't eat much.

Sail up my salt creek, girls,

viking my poor parish free.

24 June 2005

= = = = =

Coming the day before

call me at work  
that is my work  
waiting for you  
to call

spirit certainties  
sound as a ship  
no? a boat

the *Mary Magdalene* out of New Bedford  
black and much in need of pedicure  
but how she looms  
above the silly names at quayside!

24 June 2005

= = = = =

For all the falterings

this was someone.

There was a leaf

he left lying. There was a man

he answered.

Left the sky

to its own business,

Torah of the accidental

as it seemed,

growling his

science of sweet maybe.

25 June 2005

## IMPROVISING

Coming home to our lovely familiar house, making coffee in the kitchen I had to remember everything consciously. After a month in another kind of light, another kitchen, I felt I was improvising now, the way you have to do with you wind up cooking unexpectedly in somebody else's house. Here I am I what has been 'my own' for so many years – and realize that it all is improvising, all of it, every day and everywhere we improvise. When we go upstairs to our own bed, it is a lodging for the night in some weird hostel, winds from nowhere howling in the muffled fireplace. And by the time we wake in the morning, it will be another country, everything has to be learned again. Where are the spoons? Who is my sister?

25 June 2005