decH2005

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Look for the place where the stream falls
and the road rises – there, where the phone rings
and the woman from the wheat farm
calls to tell us the grain is risen
gold and red and white by turns
over the eastern hill and I believe
anything I’m told, any god there is
stark naked blue or all those arms or pale
in the core of the morning – yes I will
I say to the telephone, yes I always will,
hold it for us tenderly, we’re on our way
deep into your ovens, your plans, your mouth.

22 December 2005
I never wrote
another life
but this

These leaves
in one basket
days, most
all the days
I ever had

count them
and the ones
left over
are for the nights

_o und die Nächte_
where each dream
is a year of its own

a year of days.

22 December 2005
COUNTING BY CONTRARIES

I had an old book
that showed the flags of Europe
Serbia was there
and Russia with an eagle on it
and a little cross still
there for Denmark.
How long a sign lasts.
The mottlings on the moon
whose fingertips permitted them?
I read any pebble that I see
in search of primordial identity.

22 December 2005
THE WOLF’S CONFESSION

Trotting unseen through the marketplace
biting pretty people on the hip,
quick chomp, let go, or little nibble
seldom drawing blood – sometimes
only a thin scarlet trickle down
their white chlamyses reveals
my pilgrim caresses. What I love
I lightly wound – no blame.

But priests! I have antipathy
to priests, they are so clean,
clean as dentists, clean
as scouring powder, they taste
of all their sedulous abstentions
and water and ignorant pride.
So what am I to do with them,
I will not bite such thin stuff
so I stare at them with my gold eyes.
I live in the corner of their sleep,
a filthy wolf to look at them
just look, and my growl you hear
in their chests sometimes as
they gasp and toss and turn
beneath their crucifixes.

23 December 2005
These woods where alpine essences were gathered…

a line from Jules Verne, essence of a stone up in the sky garnered in a leaf and its stem, its hundred year old stem all wood and permanent:

“God only knows what happens to my leaves, my little mouths, my hands— they fall from me and lie or blow away and after a long time spent bare with thinking my new leaves come and I can feed again and talk. But what are all the dead leaves for, thousands of years of them, shouldn’t the world be full now with all the things I’ve thought, I and my mind, how can there be room for anything but my leaves? Yet there is, and my leaves are all gone green again. and there always seems to be something more to be said and I survive to say it. And all the while the mountain says nothing. Can it be that all my leaves with all their talk are speaking only this nothing that the mountain says?”

23 December 2005
Logothete but not elected.
Appointed. By the Sea Gull Emperor.
In service to the Seal Queen.
Wearing my cormorant uniform
my outstretched wings on which
the whole history of the world
appears one word after another.
    I am a sign.

23 XII 05
HEILIGABEND

Ballet dancers in the Austrian palazzo
mean it’s Christmas Eve. Nobody born
anymore. Not much fun in dying.
In between there is the dance, see here,
the wax drips down the chandeliers
gold as molasses in my mouth or yours
we don’t have to decide just yet.
The library has marble floors, glass doors
to keep the books asleep, a statue
of the Emperor of the Middle in the middle
naked marble with a golden wand.
I suppose it takes magic just to stand there
year after year looking beautiful, yes,
what could be more magic than a thing?
Outside the eventful snow. Picture me
telling you this, picture you listening.
No fireplace, no glass, nothing but opera.
The oval-faced soprano opens her mouth
ovally, very, and shares her mild desire.
Then the tenor gets to exaggerate, which
is all music ever tends to do, left to itself,
meaning to us, the listeners, we dogs
lying lazy all around its chilly house.

24 December 2005
I want to walk into your shadow. And what do I there? I nibble the shadow of your heels until you start shifting your feet, nerves they call it but I know better, my Czarina, it is me. Not till you lift one leg over the other at the knee is the heel of the one safe from my gnaw, but the other...ah, the other! Lies at my mercy. And we who walk into shadow show no mercy. There is no sun in there to show us.

And speaking of nerves, consider what a person is: you are a tree of nerves, a great sprouted blossoming plant of neural networks, ganglions fruiting on the vine of you. You are your nerves, my Czarina, all the rest is just meat.
I too have sat dined at the Verdurins, was just as dopey as the ones I ridiculed across the table beyond the pale preposterous tureen, sneering their way as they were keeping the evil eye on me. This is called conversation. Words we speak are as the farts of mental bewilderment, terror, sleep. This is called language, a noble animal we bruise by using. Our beast.

24 December 2005
CHRISTMAS EVE

for Charlotte

You ask me how your necklace looked
the little silver one of leaves with glittering
stones all simple and lean as a thought
and I want to tell you it looked beautiful
but so did your mauve lace-necked top
and your dark skirt, your boots, your earrings,
your hips and arms and breasts
and the beauty of your face still makes me shy,
because you were the loveliest girl at the party
and all the pretty ladies with their pretty ways
and moues and moves and pouts and smiles
and come-hitherings and their little babies
sent to crawl cutely this way and that or drowse
on mama’s photogenic embonpoint,
all these seemed false and trivial, even the ones
I knew were nice and really unassuming
but the look of them would kill the heart
whereas to look at you makes everything
Christmas again and I thank the light it’s you
I come home and be with every night.

24 December 2005
How was your Christmas?

One Christmas is much like another. Christ is born, he grows up, learns something he wants to tell us, and we kill him. It seems to happen every year or cycle or whatever it is, again and again. I wonder if it will ever be different. I wonder will we ever let him live. And if we did, what would he tell us then? What inconceivably radical understanding of the way of things? Would he let us look through the eyes of silence?

24 December 2005
as if rain
could come out
into snow
we stand to believe
the simplest things.

24 XII 05
Less from the old weather
and more from the moves
they people what they do

I am a dancer, I inhabit my action
(the glove yearns for the hand)

25 December 2005
Now who is this child they say is born?

“color of wheat the color of corn” they said of him when I was a child, I saw no child, I saw always the man in him, born with holes in his hands already, hands he brought close to me, to show the light through.

Who is this child they say is born?

The mobsters in blue suits smoked outside in the snow around the edges of midnight Mass. What does this have to do with that, that’s what the child I was kept wondering. What does this anger, this money, this meanness, have to do with that child, what child? Inside the church, Mrs Grimaldi sobbed for her dead son, apparently indifferent to this Son just born. Nor her son. Or is it? What does any of it have to do with him?

Who is this child they say?

I keep thinking I know something about him, something everybody knows or nobody knows, I don’t know, but I keep knowing something. Seems strangely small things I know: that he spoke Greek of a sort every day, that he lived with a woman with hazel eyes and very dark brown hair, that they were probably married, that he spent most of his time traveling until he came home and met her and settled down for a while, but couldn’t stay settled. Couldn’t keep quiet. He started to talk, and wander around talking to people. He talked not the way priests and professors talked, but the way people talk who really know what
they’re talking about. Who have learned it themselves. Who know the words, but have also learned by themselves and in themselves the referents of the words. Words like kingdom and father and changing the mind.
Alone in my own house
I’m standing around at a bad party
and all these super-dull people
in my head keep moving me
around from room to room
as if I’m looking for something
to eat I’m not hungry
or something to read
but I’m not interested
I want to put down something
I’m not even carrying,
that’s what I want to do
I want to forget and start over again
but there are all these rooms
around me, all my life
my fountain pens my desires.

25 December 2005
Always time for a walk. 
Time has walk 
in it as walk has 
permission to behold. 
Gold. Granted things.

In my veins a veering 
to be there. There 
has here in it 
famously. I love 
what happens.

This is confession. 
They taught me early 
the basic truth: 
bless me 
for I have sinned.

26 December 2005
for I will walk out in the mist of the morning
cold but glad to be moving
can it be a simpler gift than that but so much depending
the weather and little traffic
and the road is mine for a hour and the fog understands

26 XII 05
peeling paper of the birch
stream turbulent from melting
snow and sheets of water
slide across the road in rain

this is the downhill path
what the morning
sun crucified behind the clouds
invisibly is trying to amend

if I am lifted up I will draw
all things to me
even the little river that finds
its way to the big

geriver finds its way to the sea
who rises in her time
to me also, amnion, the
weather of eternity.

26 December 2005
MESSENGERS

Suppose they settled for me,
those angels who come down to fetch a king
or admiral or celebrity,
ran out of time and took me instead.

Do angels run out of time?
Check on this. And research
the whole relationship of time and angels.
And where do angels live?

Suppose they took me, faute de mieux,
and carted me into the visible sky
(else why bother) and turned me
into a minor constellation: Anxiety,
or The Industrious Logopractor,
they’ll never get my name right
but there I’ll be, my penis, left eye
right knee α, β, γ respectively

of this unknown constellation.
Then by my faint light you’d see
not much, but you would feel
my influence on your astrology,
Venus tickling Mercury
when both in Pisces – it would feel like that,
naughty but nice, inconsequential,
a poem you read on the subway and forget.

26 December 2005
BOXING DAY

Put everything away.
I didn’t eat too much
or laugh too hard,
I hardly had
a holiday at all.
But with a life like mine
why would I want
an interruption?

That sounds proud
but I just mean thank you,
thank you Lama
and thank you Light
and thank you Lady
for all your gifts,

Light that lets me.

26 XII 05