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COLORS

The catch or glee
the quick thing stung
as by a yellow bee
wandering among

you think they’re flowers
but I know better,
down from the towers
of cloud fell a letter

I read it, I am reading it still.
They are not flowers
they are pirate colors
who seize the forms of things
and make their show their breasts
their mouths their privities
to amaze this sleepy world,

colors are the pirates who
come sailing in from Somewhere Else,
you’ll never guess,
and what the earth would be
without them,
all anxious sightless,
all columns and columns and columns
of numbers on grey pages without end

the letter said.
See to it that you are
where colors come
and let them capture you
and make you serve

dappled glory crazy story of the Other
who sent them to ravish you
on their slender ships of light.

16 May 2004
singing is stinging

listening is lust

16 V 04
1.

late because somewhere

a mercy on the man
who fills his mind with mind

2.

sailboat on the Vineyard Sound
more and more till I can’t count
my heart says the word regatta and
I try to understand

3.

and over all the clam shells of the Hammels
the conquistadors of East New York
falter towards Rockaway to feel
and pleasured in Playland on cold lager
leave in the sand human footsteps
conniving at happiness

4.

as if a street’s the only place to dance
and then I move and you
make the body of the President to sing.

16 May 2004
Cast of miracles
and then some flowers,
Childermas
and hot for winter–

there was much more going on
than sin and punishment

there was silk I never mentioned
for I was Homeros first and then
all the rest of you in turn
anxious in Eden

you were my simple people
and I was your book

and there was the naming of things.
Nothing more
but that’s still not finished,

a man for instance with blue wings
and his tongue tip in the abyss,
what shall we call him?

16 May 2004
BLACKWATER

Could in and after
all be so close to me
through the valley
east of the Taunton River
that something’s hidden

of our First Intention,
I can’t prove it, I feel it
is bad enough, near the Rhode Island
line then keeps northing
crossing the low hills and off
east I feel it, Chief Anawan’s misery
and the breaks of changing,

loyalty to the place itself
and if that breaks
what other fealty holds?

where we left the gods we brought
and killed with gods we found,

what is it I feel here, yes,
I take me as measure,
what makes me feel this strangeness
is what is measured,
what is it here north of New Bedford south of Taunton
that stretch of Eden
wedged against earth
where heaven is no paradise
but an angle of sharp meaning
a *norma* let into the trees there
to guide us yet,

but to what altar.
No altar, bird chatter,
Dante gibbering in the scrub pines.

I’m telling you where not what it is
but that’s something, I’m telling you go find it,
we need an accurate
fix on it, we need to parse this feeling.

17 May 2004
DELPHINIUMS

Delphiniums and small china red roses on the table
amazing in the blue glass vase. They look at me and say
Everything! Everything! And one large yellow rose.

17 May 2004
<late> ===========================

But all of that keeps waiting and why not?
A field of Canada geese mumbling corn
from water stubble. Where I die
is where I must be born. After rain,
princesses in thorn trees, they
finally forgive the obvious.
They love to feel the energies they rouse.

So the Sabines reckon. Or those idioms
in my mouth that try to want you –
spirit inside matter, matter inside water,
the strange water they call electricity,
a kind of amber thing, your cat understand you
but not as well as I do, touch by touch.

There are so many opposites in this world
of ours, mystery of the dancing police.

17 May 2004
Of all that keep waiting a stone
is spokesperson enough, a board
with nails in it, a crow in a dead tree –
nothing is missing.

You call it war
I call it the second movement of
a lost Fauré sonata, dreamy
and demanding as any girl
on the Eve of St Miriam when
in dreams one witnesses all the sad
things that are to come and what
lover brings them.

I call it fruit
of the medlar tree, you call it
a message from the Pope,
you take it from your wallet
still smells of new calfskin
unfold it, read it to me.

I don’t know that language.
The air smells like a marble quarry
this morning.

You disagree: No
it looks like the last day
of the Battle of Gettysburg,
dying men remembering their wives
but getting the names wrong. Sunshine.
Foxes waiting in the bushes
for all this curious fuss to stop
and they can get on with the world.

18 May 2004
Sometimes the sky envelopes my tears
and I wonder how long I will last under its presence

but wonder if comfortable for me, I like to walk around
with my snout in the air, the tears

dry on my face in the light of sun or moon or stars or cloud
whatever the Lucency is coming from that hour

after I tear open the sky envelopes to see what’s on God’s mind now
after all these years of Bible Bible Bible just this kiss

yes that’s what it is, a the kiss of all this,
presence folded inside absences inside presence

like the sunburn itching on my face at midnight
something always present, I look around, I’m looking hard

for someone to talk to now and display my tears
because emotions are only motions on their way to you, yes you
the one whose presence in my mind lasts longer than sunburn
winter, spring again, maybe all my life you last in me

when you are lost out these in the sky world, hence tears in the first place.

18 May 2004

[Note: Christie’s first lines actually ended with the word ‘pressure’ but I misread it on the
blackboard as ‘presence.’]
a horn
from some beast’s head
hollow
to blow through

a day
and not much to show for it

celebrate a vacancy
made to resound,
built up in the curved and curving
channel a complex tone

something you’d hear once
and remember a long time
but then forget and yet
a very long time to come
suddenly recall

like the smell of some fried eggplant you ate once
when Penn Station was still standing
and a girl was walking across the street from it
somehow eternally in red clothes.

18 May 2004
This blessing in disguise business bothers me like a tune the guy is teasing with and can’t get right, dispersing whatever old time sagesse or doctrine a melody might still be able to wield over gibbering vibes, time to have children and then you’re seventy five and no idea seems particularly good, maybe Tiffany & Co. has the answer, picture a window I mean a classy vitrine full of rocks are you with me?

I thought I was but then my interlocutor shifted the conversation by a deft elbow westward to include a dapper blonde who had drifted I thought my way over from the chopped liver, sure, I like diamonds, so he went on, the matter with matter is the not quite material hand that has it, holds it, enrolls it in a queasy army of acquisitions more noumenal than now, neither (he rhymed it with knee fur) here nor where? When? Is it a woman ‘of a certain age’ or ‘uncertain age’ she wanted to know,
back is forth so often that I can’t stand still.
Many martinis later hearing Mandeville’s marvels,
moppets shooting marbles, melp me, I man’t mop.
Puck! That’s better. *She gets impatient with my face*,
that’s the name of the song, I don’t hear anything do you?

19 May 2004
The marvel is that on a cool spring morning some people are enough in touch with their body to pull cotton sweaters on while others stay in their tee-shirts and the wind blows. Calendar louder than skin or breath or wind. The wonder is that anybody notices anything.

19 May 2004
There is also a smile
somewhere in the world

I bow my head to it
I let it sink inside me

so that the man or meat of me
smiles too, a change

happens everywhere when
something happens here

I slip inside the smile
everything green.

19 May 2004
RICH MAN, BLIND MAN

Everything I see
belongs to me.

19 V 04
Are we later or are we other, 
laughter lives at the next table

over the mesa a curl of cloud
like the sky taking pictures of the earth

long time no desert
it is so long since I was dry

a red dusts sifts into the telephone.

19 May 2004, Hyde Park
Who gave you this coin?
It fell from the sky.
What was it doing up there?
It was hiding the sun
the way your thumb
at arm’s length blots out the moon
or the way a feather
falls so quietly to earth
after owls and crows have fought
so shriekingly up there.
What do you mean?
That everything is different
that this silken necktie on a hook
means nothing in itself but
tying it on means everything –
a sign of the cross, a semaphore,
a signal to the conductor
we are ready at last to leave this
station halfway to the sky?

19 May 2004