DREAM OF THE ROCK

Stood on the rock
and explained rock.

Picked up small rocks
that explained
where I had come from

where I must go.
Gravity, light, weight,
heat, Weak Force,

the rocks fell
into the explained world

kept happening
all round me

faster than explanation
the snow of things.

This
was Sisyphus –

any rock,
no hill needed,

no hill needed
just a rock

no pushing, no pulling
no falling back,
just a rock
to pick up
and then another

hold it on
on the palm of the hand

the balance is there
inside the rock

the hand finds it
the explanation sleeps.

21 December 2004
And this is solstice,
the sun a stone
balanced.

How long it took me to realize
the dream I had on solstice was a solstice dream,

showed all.
Even down in the corner
a tiny figure:
me, explaining
the picture to a friend
and then – beyond
the picture frame –
to you all

in the picture every
image held
in balance.
The balance.

21 December 2004
Midnight
voices on tv
eight fishermen
lost at sea
off Nantucket
last night
in zero weather
I smell the lilies
in Betty’s kitchen
a smashed boat
somewhere
in the dark sea
the Coast Guard
has combed fifteen
thousand square miles
not so cold tomorrow.

21 December 2004
Boston
Cornelia Street the old apartment
modernized now with a corner
chopped off to make a terrace
and our gay host seemed
not to know it had been Gerrit’s place
those years ago (it hadn’t, it wasn’t
Gloucester, it was Manhattan,
28 Cornelia Street, the back house
built 1805 a slum, a toilet
with a kitchen beside it, mattresses
on the floor, not Gerrit,
Charles O’Malley, the reverend, S.P.R.
and all, the priest, where I met
among so many) so now I was

and was now on the roof of the building
which abutted seamlessly the natural urban landscape
lots and gullies and streams of rain water run off and all
all of it, empty lovely in a love among the ruins way
and I walked, in sandals, wading when I wanted,
wondering about eels and rats, liking the morning,
licking the sunshine off the sky,

then from where I stood on top of the house
I could see in the middle distance this house I stood on
–and just then Charlotte came to me
carrying a pan of filleted fish
a trout from the size of the pale raw pieces
she’d caught this morning in the Sawkill
far from here and ready for the fire.

22 December 2004, Boston
Find the poetry
in the telling?

The poetry of the dream
lost on waking,
find it again
in the way of telling?
Invention of poetry.

That’s all that poetry must do:
claim the dream.
Everything else is propaganda.

22 December 2004
Boston
Watching China in Spanish
is a little like a dream.
Channel 884.
The sado-masochistic grammar of Gaelic.
The sea wind blowing in at Waikiki.

22 XII 04, Boston
Anything I remember
is an animal.

Becomes a living thing
runs around the
house I have for a head.

Daytime moonrise
the orb like smoke.

A sign on me
and what I mean.

Sometimes I wish a simple thing,
a cigarette, a rock.

But a rock no one ever sat or stood on,
a rock for me
to stand up on
as night slips down over the world

and I stand on my rock
and breathe the way I want –
this, this is religion.
The apertures
or my small Elves
these winter butterflies

or elegant electrons
going to church morning and even
around their nuclear pronoun.

*

We will find in the end
that there are as many ‘subatomic’ particles
as there are pronouns.

The sentence
maps itself forever

or at least until all parts of speech
in all languages have met and loved and bred—
predicated each other, conjugated,
and been predicated by. Only then
might the sentence end.

That is the meaning of Schwarzschild’s famous Black Hole, as his
contemporary, the chemist Primo Levi so poignantly intuited: the
period towards which The Sentence is hurrying even now.

23 December 2004
Boston
What is Torah?
A girl named Lisa said “A Bible on a stick.”
What is Torah?
A man without a Jew said
There is a single sentence the world speaks–
    Torah is the underlying grammar of what it says.
Or,
all the words that can be written by all the ink an elephant could carry – and still the sentence is only beginning.

23 December 2004
Boston
Things along the way to being
touch me in the night.

A dream or a pillow.

Who can tell how long the road is
before it talks.

24 December 2004
But I was waiting,
I had shallow thoughts
like an asthmatic breathing,

I had hands
but they were like sticks on fire
two or five or ten flames
adding everything up by consuming it.

But I was waiting,
I had no idea,

I knew nothing
and that made me wiser than anybody
and very quiet

like a gourd on the ground
and the ants had gone in for the winter.

Very wise
like sunshine on the lawn
before the snow
and after it again.

24 December 2004
<LATTICE OF THE TONGUE>

[staring up at middle distance mountains…]

[text picks up in the middle of discourse:]

…trees. Dangerous to be among trees, one for each person in your life, one for each fear. There is a waterfall up there, you can see it from here

[here the dreamer, awakened by the text he was hearing, and having gotten up and scribbled those words down, went back to bed, dozed into the ‘same’ dream. Language went by he tried to track, then was jolted awaker by the next phrase, got up to write it down:]

the dance of language is the flash around the frame

– the flash of light

the openness or emptiness from which language speaks is impersonated in the visual field (the visual world) by light. White. The mist above the winter lake in the Berkshires. The waterfall (you can see it from here).

[the dreamer is almost fully awake now, in the kind of dream called ‘thinking.’]

Dream stuff. Waking is an invention. Making a new day out of the scraps of the last. Out of the must of dream. The musth of dream, crimson silken lust and elephant stampede.

Back to the image: a vista
not too distant, of blue hills and trees and one
waterfall up there like smoke that you can see from here. Not sparkling clear, more like smoke.

Seeing it in dream as I am doing is a little like looking through the knothole at Duchamps’ last work, “The Fountain of Blue Gas” as the dream-mind names it, secure from inspection in the Philadelphia museum. Please visit it and bear me in mind.

When you look at those far hills you will feel my voice also in your body resonating with your own.

As if two languages shared one mouth one voice and that’s what makes the body be, come into existence like smoke from fire.

But if the body is smoke what is the fire? (Where’s the fire?)

Unless the fall of water you can see from here is really a rise of smoke, then all the hillside is a quiet fire, rocks and trees for flames.

I knew trees were dangerous, a lot of them, one for each name.

(All the names in your life the set of which you are a member, the rememberer. and in this forest your destiny is lodged, your doom roaming towards you, wild beast,
and you towards it, no tamer,
the names will slay you
and still not say the Name.)

But after that fire (that thinking)
after it (body, hillside, waterfall,
flash of light behind and beside the image,
frame flicker, flashdance of light against
the image of anything the light reveals,
flashdance of emptiness against the evidence
any spoken word proposes, light against
image, silence against word)

after it, after waking, there is the blue flame
of the gas range in the kitchen, the blue flame
beneath the water,
blue as Novalis’ flower, as my hydrangeas
(Count Robert’s hortensias)

blue as this.

Standing in the kitchen and looking reverently at the blue flame, I
recovered one more secret of the alchemists. The flame is burning
oxygen out of atmosphere, rescuing the eternal nitrogen from the
sharp give and take of breathing systems, beasts, us. The air is a
plant, almost.

Nitrogen feeds flowers, oxygen feeds humans. That is the
difference. Earth is a beautiful blue balance of two spiritually
divergent super-races or biota, animal and vegetable. An uneasy
balance, as my blue flame reported.

I lay there listening to the dream talk. And then I supposed that I
was writing down these words I was hearing, which were
coincident with what I was seeing, words simply telling what was there before me, and I was simply writing down what I heard. After a time, as the words themselves caught my interest, I realized that I was only dreaming a pen in my hand, only dreaming a paper, and that I would have no evidence to submit to the court later, on waking, to prove where I had been.

Testing where I had been.

So I got up in the dark and found my pen and started writing in the wake world. But now I didn’t hear the words. I was just seeing them as my hand wrote them in the skimpy light of just before dawn. And now I wasn’t seeing the hills, trees, waterfall – just seeing the words.

One thing takes over from another, drives it out. Members, dismembers, remembers. It was the phrase *flash of light around the frame* that really woke me from writing to writing it down.

25 December 2004

[As I was waking, I thought that this that I’d been dreaming, writing, thinking, was part of the Physics of Language piece – though it doesn’t seem so now – and that this part of it was also called something like *The Lattice of the Tongue*.]
moves from earth to heaven
meeting on her way
the descending regiments of angels
come to celebrate a birth

but who knows whose?
everybody’s born today
everybody uncurls in hay
under the mother’s smile

even if the mother’s role
is played by a tree or a cloud.
But the translator’s way
carries all this information

up where it can be processed
by the mind of God,
that reader, who might otherwise
know nothing of all this

agonies and interludes and Magic Flutes
and might just think that nitrogen
and oxygen were dancing down below
with nothing but their molecules,

the reader might not know
that every text can be lifted up
to show the skeleton of sense
and all the mushroom webs of inference
down here below the hegemonic
word. So it’s up to her
to let the angels and their office know
the real identity of that child

man woman adult animal bird
the everliving life they praise.

25 December 2004
There are pieces of understanding
locked in the broken mirror
the whole glass knows nothing of

We are turned
by the desire of another
malicieux et superbe

whose high refusals
prick us into deed
by which we come to know

(deathbed confession)
time’s bitterest arrow
is notched to our own bow

and we send our life from us
fast over the apple tree
to fall in the shadow

of someone else’s body
breaking the shared light.

25 December 2004
What shall they tell me
of the night?

Nobody who knows
anything about the night says
‘shall’ anymore. The night
is modern, is the future,
is where every ardent lover
goes to slake his thirst with fire.
Things wait for me there
among the bougainvillea flooding
down from Susan’s terrace.

We never forget those who wanted us,
never hate them, but never forgive.
Desire is the deepest wound they do.
Or oleander at the railroad station,
or a cloud shaped like zeppelins
coming in over the Bodensee.

But this is Hudson. No Germany.
No ‘shall.’ And the past tense of shit
is shit, not shat. And a Welshman
wears a leek in his cartoon hat.
And why is this Christmas?
Because Love read it in a book
some Arab write a Portuguese
put in Latin for an Italian
to lose his heart to, he fell
in love with every girl who passed,

so called himself Love’s Faithful One
because love is what he was always
faithful to, *i Fideli d’Amore*. Kings
and mountebanks, poets, poets.

Tamers of horses.
Every one of them
dead for a song.

25 December 2004