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## HUMAN GENDER

Human gender  
is the strangest animal there  
are boys who want to be with girls  
and girls who want them to be  
thus want to be girls with boys  
who want to be boys with girls

plus there are boys who want to be with boys  
and girls who want to be with girls  
but there are boys who want to be boys with boys  
and boys who want to be girls with boys  
while frequently there are boys who want to be boys with girls  
there are girls who want to be girls with girls  
and girls who want to be boys with girls  
but sometimes boys who want to be girls with girls

and after all this beauty there are men  
who want none of the above  
and far away or over on the other side of them  
there are the mothers.

14 March 2003

## MESH

Spilled with inner action  
a spider web  
distracts the sun

Entering phase, orchid.

Named for my tame father  
who one night knew me.

Motherless names rootless auguries  
scribe too fast to be alive  
a morbid scholiast at other people's feet  
or knees or even laps between  
San Bernardino and the real mountains

I dreamt of you in tolerable snow  
waiting finally to curl up in your hacienda  
brittle as dog bark, I am tired of not getting  
all the deals the words suppose themselves to mean

I am a medical emergency  
a man with a sign in his heart.

14 March 2003

## **THE BOY**

Standing in the cellar  
the boy could see across tomorrow  
into the whitewashed brick tomb-like enclosure  
where somebody's wine would be stored  
where elegant lean-legged non-noxious insects  
would mildly proliferate and monks come  
from time to time to sit quietly and breathe  
in trouble with their vocation.

And he could see the knees  
of women of various ages  
and calculate a due response to each  
and he could sleep, the way men  
would learn to do, safe  
in the fortress of their fantasy  
among maps and flags and fluttering skirts  
if ever he could find the simple key  
hidden somewhere right in the space  
between his eyes and what they see.

15 March 2003

## CONFESSION

Sometimes these poems are by me  
sometimes by you  
but mostly by no one

language made them  
so treat them with respect  
the way you'd treat a rose bush or a hammer

or a letter you see right this moment  
being slipped under your door  
because you never know

but it might, it really might.

15 March 2003

## **WE LIVE BY CERTAINTY**

like birds

taking the sky for granted

there is always up

beyond the predicament

morning, miners with clean collars

the insolence of light.

16 March 2003

## **CONSUMERS**

Dreams are instances  
of non-commercial pleasures.  
Extending the dream realm  
be apathetic purchasers.

16 March 2003

## **I WANT TO BE WHOLE AGAIN**

You never were.

The words run on,  
every word you speak  
divides unity.

16 March 2003

## **DEER LEDGE**

A rock ledge  
northeast of my house  
deer have been known  
to walk along  
silhouetted against  
moonlight to the stream  
but the rock is there all the time.  
Our names confuse  
sometimes with always,  
the sound of words  
on a summer evening  
once and you  
thought it was the world.

16 March 2003

## QUIET MORNING

They must have laws  
to regulate  
the silences.

A woodpecker at suet,  
water in the radiator creeps,  
clock tick.

    These multitudes  
of little noises  
are what we call silence.  
Hard beak soft fat —  
loud shadows of bare trees.  
A rule of thumb  
runs the whole.

16 March 2003

## CAUGHT

like trees  
in a mesh of shadows you  
turn at the sound  
of your name called out  
in the strange city.  
All power in the name,  
to be known, to be called  
from across the street  
to belong to someone  
suddenly who seems  
to hold the knowledge  
of who you are,  
the power to know you,  
through traffic towards the voice  
you hurry to be owned.

16 March 2003

## **WHEN YOU BEGIN TO THINK**

the silence ends.

You can remember it

minutes later

when there's only quiet

around you, reminding you

of what it was like

inside you then

when silence was,

and you existed

blissful inside it

listening. Around

the edge of feelings

a rim of light.

Live inside inside.

16 March 2003

## NINE YEAR OLD POETS

*after Rimbaud of course*

he'd lost the girl he bit the butt of  
two years ago when he was free  
now there were shadows and a self  
hardened around him like peach gum  
thicky sticky from the landlord's tree

but he was alone, his eyes  
always wide with surprise always  
narrowed with calculation, could he  
still get what he wanted, the fragrance  
of her he once took to his lonely bed

the private space he wanted most  
now could only have behind his eyes  
in the locked bathroom of his brain  
where the mysteries of earth and water,  
air and fire breathed around him

a cigarette to pray with, a flaming  
match to drop as tiny wedding torch  
into the void organics in the bowl  
ceremonies of longing and revulsion  
he was the source of everything at last,

words juicy in his sloppy mouth.

16 March 2003

## **TO BE**

To be where I am  
completely

how can I carry  
you there

the thought of you  
my permanent elsewhere

17 March 2003

## **POLARITIES**

But if you could really be here  
there would have to be another

Anode and diode always  
out of sight of each other

always hot for that  
what would anything be

without the yearning  
that holds the really together apart

the machinery works  
on such poignant separations

the priestess said and  
why not make this place

your other, a well  
with a blue light in it

the bottom of the world  
you long for

suddenly here?

17 March 2003

## **STRIX**

The witch  
spake sooth.

The owl  
ululated.

The word I meant  
cracked, crick

in my neck,  
the sky healed

I looked up  
and there in the cinch

of Orion a glitter  
new to anybody

a crack in the sky  
no nova

a lasting light  
lux permanens

stabbing down  
like a sunray

in the forest

a sinful thought

rejoices the mind

in churchly gloom

but there is no

stone no woods

the miracle

is reckless

and spills, got me

to the other side

on the flood of it,

turned out to be  
we were the same  
side inside  
the permanent war.

17 March 2003

## **WAR**

Does war start today  
as papers prophesy?  
I say no. I still say no.

17 III 03

## **PRONUNCIATIONS**

how do you say it?

eye wrack	ear rack	ear rock	I wrack
eye rack	ear wrack	eye rock	I rock

caught in the senses.

No wonder President Warbucks wants evidence.

(Remember the rich old man with no eyes?)

## HEADACHES

also want to happen.  
Be quiet while you can.  
Vast sound  
of what will come —  
can you ever be  
far enough away from here  
to silence it  
or at least tame it  
into a word  
in some other language  
you could look up  
some other time  
when you get a chance?  
Nobody talks  
to a headache,  
don't even let him on the bus.  
You turn against yourself,  
you pound your head  
against itself  
inside out, to get  
out, there is no out,  
it hurts  
but only because you're you.

17 March 2003

## COMBINING VECTORS

Will some other instrument  
sing this music?  
Lost in pronouns  
emotions are bound to this earth.  
As long as she excites me he bores me  
I am caught in the family,  
a man carrying around  
a vast illegible sign in the rain.

17 March 2003

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All this self and other shit  
miracles, sheer miracles.

17 III 03

## THE REPRESENTATIVES

1.

One after another  
we unzip our chests  
and splay back the bone-work  
to show to famous heart on fire.  
Not just Jesus, not just Milarepa  
but the licit, luminous, lucid Limit in us

where difference goes to be consumed,  
oxygen, you contradiction,  
heart of a man.

2.

                    But at midnight  
our hands scrabble in the dirt  
left naked by retreating snow  
and as we feel dirt press under fingernails  
we notice the grains of dirt give light  
a little, a phosphorescence  
where something — earth or bone or night or damp —  
loves us enough to show a glimpse of answer.

17 March 2003