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Imagine a bishop
gently slantwise in holy space
making you uneasy
because he knows too much

or once this was a game
like a hammer on an anvil
and the horses' shoes
were only an excuse

or starlight is medicine
did you know that? pure
poured out of nowhere
into the chalice of your eyes.

Everything is always getting ready.
I dance to get a chance to tell you.

1 February 2002

What can be weirder than a sonnet
a statue a painting of a yellow chair
hung in a light-soaked room?

What could be weirder than we do?
And even music's just a whistle
smelly shepherds play to keep their
personal seductive wolf away.

1 February 2002

HÄXAN (HEXENKUNST)

I have the art
of making women into witches

Nor do I have to use
sensible salves of pyschobabble

or bibles or broom.

Desire is enough to turn them
shuddering in private to their secret urns
where they brew blue
distances between us

What magic in my eyes dispels them
I stagger among signs.

1 February 2002

NEXU

in the art
of intersections

Rhinebeck rain
clatter on car roof
Japanese steel sedan

everything is named for a war

water Pearl Harbor baroque 42nd
street trolley rails delivered east

o steel o steel
in Pittsburgh they
pronounce gold with the vowel of ghoul

hockey slap a
midwinter night's dream

let me be awake again

as I an iron writer rode.

1 February 2002

for the Blake Institute

if we get some people interested in being people reading William Blake's poems in search of readers (prophetic works in the sense that they speak-for those who are about to pick them up and read)

then we could establish an Institute where from time to time we could read out loud consecutively and with along the way interventions and interpellations

the works of William Blake

then we might (besides getting to hear Blake coming out of our mouths) get to know something about

making *the body read*:

so the only way we know to let/make the body read is for all of us one by one to read out loud in the presence of the others

so we hear the body digesting, struggling, gasping out these strange words and representing to itself thereby the world into which all such language means to pour.

1 February 2002

The face is an angle of its own,
carries a cigar box with old snapshots
(memory) and a burnt-out cigar
(pleasure) still soggy in the lips.

The face is radical.

But the workshop of the angels has to be radical,
sputters with blue sparks

the sparks are you and me.

1 February 2002

Because there was mercy I struck
and striped and you were wondering
why this pain so pleased you,

logician of the boudoir. We lurk
inside each other, that's why

and you can't refuse what I
want to do to myself,

this offering, this low Mass.

Because it is quiet
in the keyhole

before any possible morning
a comforting pain.

As if together we could let
every word find us again,

this atlas of sensory experience.

2 February 2002

Call what is shattered
back to the glass

I penetrate
the backwards window till

wherever you look inside yourself
you find me.

2 February 2002

O there are so many sandbars along the way
will the wave ever get to the shore

the whole game is obstacles
sex is setting thing after thing

between us and the object of desire
which we envisage sumptuously

dressed fleeing before us only
sometimes smiling back over the shoulder

to encourage or rebuke. That smile.
How lonely love is on this planet,

to be a hunk of rusty
iron in a world of magnets.

3 February 2002

REVERENCE

If I were one of those Indo-Tibetan deities
you see in tangkas I'd be the one with
ten thousand heads so I could take
my hat off to all the ones who went before me
showing me the way, one body
isn't enough to show the reverence
I feel for so many, I am a novice
kneeling in the chapel if I were a
Judeo-Christian saint I'd be
one who kneeled all night long reciting
the names of all the benefactors
I would write your names on every wall
and you name I would carve deep into
the bark of the most hidden tree.

3 February 2002

REVERENCE (2)

Reverence and desire.
Reverence and desire and energy,
these three. These three

lead to every skill. Without them
poetry might sometimes happen to you
but you'll never be a poet.

Poetry is always happening
and even the shoddiest vessel
is wet at morning with the dew of stars.

3 February 2002

A child's desire
is curiosity

to accumulate
without examination.

Heart-felt inspection
is an adult sin.

Desire at its purest
is a sieve of particulars.

Cribriformis autem anima.

3 February 2002

The sleepest words are the clearest to read.
You see them on the lawn

after the wind has been in the catalpa
or when all the light down here is gone

you see them pricked out as stars
meaninglessly lucid overhead.

You are the book in which the meaning's hid —
now learn to teach a book to read itself.

3 February 2002

ENVOI

Blind Cyrano writes his last love letter
and folds it into his clothes
expecting Death will read it for him along the way.

3 February 2002

It is ten o'clock on a bright Sunday
and Biber is playing on the radio
and I haven't said my prayers.

Haven't gone out to get the news
only the sun, this insolent violin,
parches the damp of sleep from my mind.

Here I am again, I think.
But I have never been here before,
the dining room table

windows all around it
yellow mums in a blue glass pitcher
crows sailing through trees. Never.

3 February 2002

But it is prayer, isn't it,
this sigh you hear yourself
letting slip out of your chest

surprising you, distracts you
from the image you were pondering
and to which it must have been,

that sigh, some sort of response,
some sort of prayer.
It's in the mind that images are graven

and there it is we worship them,
idolaters, and grovel before remembered faces,
the way she looked that time she called your name.

3 February 2002

Every mirror is not the same.

All their dialects of me
propose separate voyages.

I will never get there.
Cover the glass with old dresses and shirts

the way a barking dog conceals the sun.

3 February 2002

Beyond the green light the lawn green
still or again in January reaches
the multitude of endlessly arrived fallen
leaves chase each other along the highway
I can't see beyond the stream that holds
this house cupped in its great coil
before it falls away quickly to the river
and goes where rivers go with all of us
the snaky dark through which we story
in search of one more cheap resurrection.
There is no room for me in living.

3 February 2002

Can my feelings be my feelings
can I own what I am?

In old poetry of Finns around fires
everything is said twice, or no

anything spoken
is only the half of itself

you need to say the answer
you need the next

to say itself
the thing that rises from the hearing heart

to say, to marry what the first one said.
Listen to me. I know so little

of all the things you need but I know this
you need the aggression

of what your body makes me do to you,
of everything that rises to be said,

grindstone in the mother house
wine squeezed out of the old wood.

Listen to me. You have to wake me
soon. My dreams these nights

choke me, or not my dreams,
what the night is up to with its roving hands,

wake me so I'll know it's you
and not the Kabbalah come alive while I slept

the books' revenge, their terrible narrative
trying to talk me under in the dark.

Everything has to be said twice
just to get said at all.

4 February 2002

sent to Joe Massey for *Range* magazine, issue 2, on love poems

Tomato bandsaw oscilloscope fireplace
all the slightly obsolescent things
sit in my parlor where my young aunts dance

Did you ever read Give Me
Back My Feelings? It's a book,
it fell from the moon

one night when I was reeling home
drunk on the silence of this broken town.
It tells the truth, it tells

the story of what I did to you you did to me.
I hate to read in the morning but there it is
waiting for me on my way to the light.

Maybe we should all go back and live in the sea.

4 February 2002

BITTER MINGLING

technology of cult remnants of the ethnos.
Name this child. Join you where the woods
les puits I thought you said the whale I wear
glasses you do too.

Dream me *morgen*. Morgen
has more meaning than tomorrow has.
Labels. Means well, means morning.
Mark this well in the clay
names of slaves won in the slave roads, the sites
are vulnerable, the palace water system

is a well. Un puits. Bones of an old house.
Don't think just because space is infinite
you can do what you like with it. You can do nothing
to space. You can't include it. Can't keep it out.

The bones stretch out their own. Sit on this lap
at last. Outside the church there is no salvation.
Weapons-grade metals are found there. Listen,
the gates are always talking.

Tax burden clay bronze water bees
cave road gravel dead tree freehold
pagan paranoid flame over castle wall
taxi barrow cleave barons watchers boys
seem to occupy my flight of stairs
a pair of sandals left on the top step
ordinary i.e. non-priestly women.

Where does difference come from? Who owns change?

4 February 2002

IRISH

Give me the right of way
over the grain stile to your sleep,
the right of way
over the sleep path,
the right to let me cut turf
on the heart slope,
tomorrow.

Paul Celan,
tr. Robert Kelly

ERSE

Give me the right of way
over the corn track to your sleep,
right of way
over the sleep path,
the right so I can cut turf
on the heart hill,
tomorrow.

4 February 2002

but see **irish.doc**

**for full version, translation as performance
and essay of that name**