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## HIGH WAVE

Emotions ordered into combat by a dream  
a man breaks a terra cotta wine jar  
and pours out a woman he once knew  
one of the girls he never said I'm sorry to  
and the sun walks along the habit of the sea

wind so strong from the north a gull stands in it  
one dimension flapping shadow wings

he has awakened from his sepulture, this man,  
and staggered out into the broad morning, wider  
than he has ever seen, only behind him the land unseen  
pretends the kind of penance his dream just slew

nobody remembers  
we are born  
every day different  
with phony passports

but the wind treats me as if I were really here.

23 April 2002,  
Flagler Beach

## THE SEA IS A KIND OF DESERT

1.

always coming in  
no tent in this world

the desert that it is  
calls only the discipline of a child  
is there ever a reason to spank a saint  
break the haughty spirit of the stone  
cathedrals for example the light  
meter doesn't have your number  
look at me why  
is there no word for woman  
in this language?

Trade up from your cowries  
to the weird green money  
soft as lovesongs  
read and re-read a hundred times  
stowed in your wallet  
kid, aren't you tired  
of living on the wrong  
side of the moon?

2.

Did you say

I'm just a kid who came

from wrong side of the ocean

wave,

what of it, bee-sting?

What's in it for me, finger,

you with your snug skirt on fire.

23 April 2002,

Flagler Beach

## KNOWING OCEAN

Stand by land.

I have to understand\*

the difference

\*means having

something to say

means be a flag

waving over a specious

new republic

where the junta

has ruled for 200 years

whereas Susquehanna

is our green queen

and Delaware her king

and Hudson our Horus

their one son

the last god living.

The pelican of history

has nothing in his huge mouth.

23 April 2002

Flagler Beach

## THE VIRGIN TO AN ANSWER'S PRAYER

I don't want to think about you any more.  
At least for a mile. I choose instead to remember  
Somebody I haven't seen in years.  
I'll think of you. And a new friend  
I met walking in the cemetery, stone  
by stone one builds one's name, who are you?  
I am astonished by my duplicity  
that there are so many birds in the sky  
answering a political agenda, a heart  
stuffed full of names and desires and so many birds.

23 April 2002

Flagler Beach

## A MAN

At this moment there hobbles  
past our motel a strangely but decently  
deeply sunburnt man about forty years of age  
limping and dressed in too warm a jacket  
for the day's warmth. Now this man I saw  
hours ago a dozen miles north of here  
hobbling just like that and I had a feeling  
I would see him again passing our motel

and here he is or just was, he's still walking  
and he will go on walking that way  
until he finally runs out of north  
like the man of like age two scholars met in Spain  
on the road to Compostela they called  
the Perpetual Pilgrim and he assured them  
his pilgrimage would end only in the cemetery.

We meet people and we touch them and we pass.  
And I am astonished by the lordly changefulness.  
They disappear. Even this slow-walking man I knew  
I'd see again I know I'll never see again.  
There is a kind of charity we run in dream,  
to remember all the faces we almost knew.

23 April 2002

Flagler Beach

## MOODY BOULEVARD

Capsicum weddings we believe  
hot pepper be my bride but by  
these wetlands understand  
a wooden passion, flower of time  
watered by ceiling fan  
highway all night and the moon  
your old friend with her tongue  
in her cheek the way I saw her  
speaking some word only to herself  
I need to hear, I need it,  
I need it as the sea needs the shore.

2.

Downtown Flagler County pool of tide  
brackish circumstance  
we gate our gather

woodwalk slim over wetlands  
and a heron rises,  
a crossing in Paradise  
to say the accurate angle  
the pale sand path met  
the wooden catwalk  
under how many palms

to say just that  
in the evening of my life



I become my brother  
by a previous marriage

— a former bed  
they say in French—

and I stand at the shop door selling  
self-confident visions of the obvious.

Music Store. Food Store.

A store where no one stands  
but the lights are very bright.

Look inside and understand this kind of world.

23 April 2002

Flagler Beach

## FLORIDA SUITE

Deceits  
of the sea. I could see anything,  
any mirage, any island  
over there in cloudbank,  
nothing closer  
than Africa  
and I could see  
anything but Africa.

This is Florida  
the mind is charged  
with familiarities  
the cold surf  
means to leach away and leave  
the man new  
in a new place.

Judgment later.  
Palm trees St Johns River  
yesterday today a  
flight of pelicans  
cormorants kittiwakes  
fish hawk  
hidden in the crest.  
What do I know but the names.

Delius. *Florida Suite*.

Oranges of commerce,  
the negative mountains  
where the sun hides  
inside the sea-fog,  
a sound. A sound again.  
Any percept that is named  
passes. To name it  
is to lose it  
in the too-bright habit  
of the mind like losing  
a fish, a hawk  
in the sun glare.

Freud moves to London.

I am four years old

Freud dies.

I walk up to his door  
holding your name in my lips  
to tell him we both come calling

never anybody home  
the glass door  
shows me my face  
of course with the dark  
furniture inside  
beyond me

I ask you

show me  
me, lift up  
your shirt  
like the teenage  
flasher last night  
and show me  
myself, what else  
could a seer  
ever see, show me  
the truth of me  
suddenly actual  
in the glint, glimpse  
of a strange skin.

All the rest I say is me  
is just the lie of words.

The ocean is no lie  
though it is a mother  
of all deceiving,  
stare like an idiot  
into the sun glare  
in case a whale is there,  
some word  
you want to see  
alive out there,

the Fountain of Youth  
too huge to find

all round us  
the biggest thing on earth  
we live forever  
caught in its shimmer  
the sea wind  
the cars keep passing  
interrogate  
the bare sea.

23 April 2002

Flagler Beach

## THE RESISTANCE

There are feasts in the world.  
Arrangements, hours.  
Disposals, names.  
Heretics sobbing towards the pyre.  
Someone always has to burn.

To be against the place you are  
and spend your whole life  
paying for your life

—resistance.

All night around our sleep we heard  
the dark harassments of the sea  
translate into dream-french the airport  
paranoia, everything  
is terror when you sleep.

It's getting to be dawn along the beach —  
Nominalist heresy, my heart in your hand,  
Realist heresy, you in my heart.  
Great saw-palmetto at my bedroom door,  
horizon an arm's length away, changing,  
troubador. I'll see the sun  
the moment it begins to understand.

24 April 2002  
Flagler Beach

## SWIMMING POOL

Patterns his eyes found  
in the deep corner  
patterns of beauty  
astonishing detail  
patterns the sun made  
slanting through the blue water  
patterns his moving  
hands would make change  
would sing with,  
he'd never seen the like  
before, to be a living  
part of the pattern

the unseen evidence.  
And wanted to tell.  
And then didn't want  
to tell at all, wanted to keep  
it not exactly to himself  
but to build up a deposit  
of unspoken perceptions,

a self museum, a sly  
cathedral of noticing.

24 April 2002

Flagler Beach

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Raggle tail swatch feather  
secant take my measure  
in your mood. Blue  
solitude pollution solitaire  
game card your ace  
my trump eternally resist.

Ace of aces, you. Caravan  
to Campus Stellae, star field,  
bare pilgrim, story kid,  
you are, you are the one.

I have been so far.

Trying in the last of years  
to get there by being here

and just want to rest my  
head in your lap  
and have you tell me every  
thing and give you all my money.

24 April 2002  
Flagler Beach



## CONTINUOUS ALIEN

A dance between devotions  
and suddenly the plain  
taste of your skin  
why do I care so much it's you  
what is the science of this science no one knows

the love we won't say why to ever?  
Is love like hell a why-less place?

The wind has fallen from this coast  
my sun tanned feet on morning gravel  
and the sea is all I hear

dawn liminal  
neither one  
thing or the other,  
I'm still living under yesterday's dappled water  
a world down there where brightness  
writes the blue pool

And I ask why again, why this year and ten  
years ago another  
why do we care about one another  
are we crayons in some kid's hands  
scribbling obvious sunsets everywhere?  
I want to rise with you  
I want to come above

every horizon  
and sink only in you,

why-less, windless  
the sea comes fiercely in

moved no doubt  
by what moves me.

This morning  
is not every  
morning is it

your skin still is  
special as I think?

25 April 2002,  
Flagler Beach

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The sea is still saying the same sentence  
it said sixty years ago at Rockaway  
when Nora chased me down the white sand.  
It doesn't feel to me I'm any closer  
to understanding. But maybe recognizing  
the sentence is the same is almost  
a kind of understanding, knowing  
that it means, even if not what it means.  
It is dawn in Florida. A little lizard  
idles on what looks like lava, its color  
the same as his. Clueless, faithless,  
we are part of something true.

25 April 2002  
Flagler Beach

## MEASURE THE BLUE MUSEUM

stretching up from the intersection of A1A and 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
all the way east to Africa, and up to the furry cloud  
with iridescent edges shaped like my two hands the sun  
is behind it now. The sun is the main exhibit.

Then me. Then the little stone-colored lizard on the stone.

Then the sea. Priorities. Put this into ancient Irish verse.

A fresh warm day on earth into which the wind begins to speak.

25 April 2002

Flagler Beach

## LATIN WORDS FOR COMMON THINGS

*Formica*, an ant.

*Volva*, something wrapped up snug.

*Radix*, a root.

*Turris*, my father standing looking at the sea.

*Codex*, a book with flat pages, look close, I see you walking by the sea, your legs are wet, the waves lick your waist, gulls move along silently.

*Amor*, something waiting to be discovered.

*Ignis*, a fire burning inside a coal, every little bit helps, the sky is full of roots, the sea is full of ants, something blue is inside everything, oxygen, my hand.

*Mare*, the ocean, or a thick book, or my father's only wife.

25 April 2002

Flagler Beach