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V E T C H

There should be food.

46. If a man has food  
a dream eats it

it was before we learned to say  
this is bad

unfortunate means  
there is no luck in it

luck is what you're born with  
as 47 says

a trick on the road  
spills a spinster  
into her traveler

this equals sunrise plus a [large kind of cabbage grown in swamps]

so much for fortune. Luck  
(born together, white feather  
from a hawk, then a stepping stone  
maiden tumbled in the stream  
lad fallen in the mire)  
luck is half of 18 but twice 9

because we always must remember to divide by time

and mince your sleep  
the radical hash

oozes typical cream

It is a new moon in the sky  
or none or ribald caravaners  
sit around drinking laurel tea  
sweetened with persimmon memories

(we never know why we do what we do)

but here are the jokes they tell:

1. Backside of the Moon
2. The Father's Water
3. The King of the Cats

or Cates, this is skin they're talking, this is soft  
as the broad of the back in summer, this is sweat

after this they fall asleep, each dreams  
a far away hillside covered with vetch

Vetch is a small pink or mauve or lavender  
flower with tenacious roots  
planted to stabilize soil and this maintain  
sloping highway margins, railway sidings, Vetch,

the thing that holds the earth that holds you.

I see it beside us as you drive  
though you have a cold  
the coffee must be ready now  
[53] prepared from a berry red  
then pale green then roasted  
almost black: the colors

of Aphrica the Blest  
[53b] we drink what we are  
the prophet said

Everything we drink is mother's milk

how could it be otherwise  
this is Kansas [87] by the cottonwoods  
Drancy where they wait to die  
no place is no place  
it all gives milk

Does one feel a slight breeze at this hour  
or is it sacred, or is it left to one

to do it all? Breathing,  
it means

Go get the coffee, it's the same as a telephone

Eating is the oldest technology  
Everybody does it [67]  
Before that we just lay there waiting *to die*

which is what we thought the wind was called.

History of the World.

Explore the habit patterns of the rich  
whim grows into wish, wish  
is perceived as need, outgrows contentment.  
Teach need. Sensed need runs the market.

No one must be left unwanted.  
Arrogance and itch. The rest is leather.

I miss you so  
when the leaves grow alternate  
the berries ripen  
so far from my lips

That door leads to another thing.  
If you go through it  
nothing bad.  
Only you are not here any more.

But what *was* the wind called, Daddy?  
We called it nothing  
it was one more weather

an apple gate  
an esplanade

an archaic system of exchange.

If it weren't for the solids in the world  
what would shield us from the look of the sun?  
The empty gaze that makes us tremble,  
our eyes the feeble answers to that scrutiny.  
The house helps us. In its shade  
at dawn a structure cherishes the western dew

are you a movie  
that you can talk that way  
language swaying your hips

and in between each picture nothing waits

[24] roadmaster

coup de grace

the first car (Kipling)

changed the whole world forever

distance sickened

and came close to die

even if a car's not red it goes too fast

four crows on a bare branch system

solar timetable

the elves in twelves unmake the clock

angels? I don't even believe in the girl  
across the street. Sara? I was speaking  
metaphorically (how dare you?)

but Sara will do ---- 24?

Not yet. Behind the blue

her eyes are the color of slate

she hides in a spring fed pond her husband dug

when revenueurs cringe up the road

sniffing for the telltale

marmalade smell of morning

under the limestone cliffs

how dare they

disguised as numbers

travel up our little roads and nerves and veins

trying to carry everything back to the father?

And you arose then  
in your fresh skin  
hovering on the meniscus of my mind  
not touching

[66] before pronouns were invented  
and we were all just anybody else.

But you have been before  
in many guises  
and it was always the skin that told me  
who you really were  
cool in summer warm in lilac  
where the missing me is buried

safe in your meaning  
like a cat answering the telephone

you know your house is still standing  
you know the air still moves  
shadows of levitating crows brush through locust trees

and all of this is yours (mine)  
do you understand  
we met to part and part to meet?  
I don't know what it means but I know that it's true

across the street from the cathedral

drinking espresso and watching you  
finish the Sachertorte on your little plate  
eyes delicate with greed (yours) (mine)  
I dieted because two beings need  
to negotiate a single, simple, space

[11] and everyone is homosexual  
didn't you know that?

all evidence is contrary  
we are alone inside on either side of sleep

hence the World Trade towers had to be trashed  
by self-consoling heteros

they thought they were but they were queer as we  
they hated how we advertised against the sky

[11] our structural identity, our separateness  
two tall bodies side by side, not touching –

but I digress. The unity is [23].  
Sara hasn't reached it yet  
and Sarah never will.

Seven million years this skull from Tchad.  
Avatars of Africa.  
Number of life. [cheth yod heh]  
And luck is born there  
one number among many

as the woman teases half-forgivingly some sleaze



I've got your number...

but who has mine?

Who knows the robert rapture white with terror  
the wine-soaked counterpanes the barren  
mountain full of rain and gulls  
and believing everything the ocean says  
waves hurl me on to you, you

we're all just hawaiis scattered on the sea.

What else can the poor sleaze say?

*Why did you come into the world if you didn't want me,  
into the bar if you were not looking, looking for me?*

we live pronouncing every day  
the simple script love wrote for us  
way back when we were simple  
when we were good  
and we remember  
because it wakes inside us when you come in,

because *it* can't tell you from you.

If you wait just ten minutes more  
the bees will get tired of the sun

come home with me and taste  
the sacred dew I gathered from your roses

before they grew  
before you were you

gathering with more than my usual patience  
and unwonted delicacy each lucid drop

I wheedled into this crystal little flask  
proposed to you now

break your fast in me  
for I have need of your receiving

[number lost] kabbalah,  
listening to your husband talk in this sleep

or he cried out with a great sound  
as if one crushed him with a stone  
but it was only the sun, rising.

Because you own everything  
the light and the window it calls through  
the apple gates and humble bees  
and passing SUVs  
you own the plumbing underneath the thought  
pale checkmarks on the teacher's roll  
the glue that holds the book together

and you aren't even there [22]  
sad multiples of what I mean

one cylinder shy of the adequate machine

so this flower is planted  
against erosion  
I think they think the color doesn't count

as long as the dirt stays on the slope

things do their work  
and we look at the colors  
left behind to sway our eyes  
by nobody, the king of trees

only one more faggot for the fire

(unimaginably) big number  
your hands can't hold all the zeroes,  
roses, gnoses,  
terebinth of Uncle Mose  
my Egyptian  
father in law asleep beneath his cherry trees

random numbers of flowers growing here and there  
and every number of them organizes  
an unmeant history that the flowers tell

because we listen ---- what else can we do  
in a silent world?

A car door slams

a bird flies away –  
do you believe me at last?

In this dark dance  
there is a thread of touch  
follow to the quiet  
wall that holds us all,  
the forgiven and the living

hushed in the arrogance of air.  
You spinsters, get up and follow me.  
you bachelors, close your books  
and wind your letters round a bobbin  
tight until the alphabet falls out

nothing is dependable  
except keep moving

I don't say a word and you hear me perfectly well.

13 July 2002

## THE COMMITMENT

It's all right to give me your number now  
how I won't have to how I won't get to  
do how about it how you are safe  
with me not doing how you remember  
how I was and how it has to be with  
people like us. They strap it on your back  
and you carry it the rest of your life.

14 July 2002

## THE ENCHANTER MEANT

*for Charlotte*

to be more straightforward, simple effects,  
roses from the sky. Deliver us from narrative.  
Deliver us from line. Let a thing blossom  
suddenly (one rose from one sky) without remorse,  
without consequence. God bless the episode.

But the forest had ideas of its own.  
You could walk a thousand miles from tree to tree  
never touching the ground if you were a squirrel or a rat.  
Even people were soon lost in the thick of it,  
always looking for a *road*, that oldest of all fictions,  
endless Dickensian taradiddle, history.

Be now, he tried to tell them, nowhere to go,  
look at this phony rabbit I make soft for you,  
look at this flower that never was  
and never will be, I pluck it for you,  
a flower that is only now, it blossoms  
utterly and just for you, *this*  
against the abstract silences of *those*.

But the little voices he was converting  
said: but I'm the one this happens to –  
once I see your rose my story starts,  
I am the unfolding of what I saw  
and that is all I see in what I see –  
can you break time?

But time  
is just the distance built in space,  
the gap in our experience of us.  
Space is all around you all the time  
and time is the sleep between places,  
not a story, not a road. Live this.

And in such argument the forest is kept busy,  
you hear it when you walk by, wind in tree tops,  
travelers in underbrush, the busy material. The happy grove.

14 July 2002

see revised text from August 8, on following pages

## TIME

Time is only an enchantment.  
Whoever runs it runs it for us.  
It suspends a given moment  
so the enchanter can try  
some urgent magic that lets us change.  
Every enchanter struggles  
to be more straightforward,  
flourish simple dazzling effects,  
roses from the sky.

Deliver us from narrative.

Deliver us from line. Let a thing blossom  
suddenly (one rose from one sky) without remorse,  
without consequence. God bless the episode.

But the forest had ideas of its own.  
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the gap in our experience of us.  
Space is all around you all the time  
and time is the sleep between places,  
not a story, not a road. Live this.

With such theology our forest is kept busy,  
you hear it when you walk by,  
wind in tree tops,  
travelers in underbrush,  
the busy material.  
Year after year the happy grove.

revised 8 August 2002

## TWO PHOTOGRAPHS

Landscape. Identical  
to the eye  
no more naked than usual.

One is labeled *Here*.  
The other is labeled *Here. Without me*.

Which is which?  
Show them.  
Show myself to me.

14 July 2002

KTC

## ON THE LINE BETWEEN SLEEP

When it gets hungry it falls  
below the ketone barrier  
and is asleep  
with the mushrooms and Swedish sulfur mines

and its compulsive dream  
(bollard, opaque green water, ferry  
grinding hard against its slip)  
is picked up on our world as music

(anything that makes you listen  
and not just hear) (is music)  
(melos is attention, melody attention paid)  
and every shadow's a word

left for you to read  
and the tower is *half built*  
the minute it rises a foot above the ground.  
For ground is absolute

(like wind, like sulfur) (like fear)  
a white plastic lawn chair  
among the eternal elements  
sits there under the mountain

(there is no mountain) deciding  
which of all these old snapshots is  
*herself when young* or which  
of all these houses he was born in.

His house, his element, his stone.  
These are old things to be known  
(can hardly walk) (the stars ahead)  
detective stories scattered here and there

fluttering their surprising solutions.  
I am the last chapter of your world  
he spills his coffee on the table  
everything is explained so now what?

Across from the Rathaus some Turkish workers  
huddle against the wind, they plan  
an insurrection if they could get their fingers  
out of their pockets, if passing lovers

didn't look so happy, so complete, so with it,  
so definitive, so absolute and  
when will love come to each of them that way,  
the way it came to me and stayed

and all my groans and feints are love work  
and all my energies are born in you,  
how could you doubt it, my body also  
broken on that diamond wheel.

And this is just more explanation  
telling why the streets are suddenly empty.  
Usually at this hour the wind falls  
but tonight (I watch the river) it rises.

14 July 2002, KTC

## **EXEGI**

How much more can I confess?

I've gone beyond everyone

but always turn back for you.

And still my shadow falls in Paradise.

14 July 2002

KTC

## FAUNUS

Let there be an animal such that it's neither  
here nor there, like an item in the news  
not done and not not done, a report  
only, from which the little twigs of reality  
broke off. An animal such that it comes  
and goes at once, caresses us with absence.

15 July 2002