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In the silo  
what is stored?

I want to write  
the answer  
all my life.

Childhood equips you with inexhaustible mysteries, puzzles you spend your whole life solving. Everything you make or think or say tries, usually in vain, to *disclose* these central unknowns.

Let everything be as easy as it is and we still need to wrestle with the dark.

I mean the question remains always larger than the answer, than any possible answer.

That is what keeps us going. A root dissatisfaction with partial answers, a root commitment to the time of the question,

those questions, that sustain us. Whose sign we read in so many places, so many hours.

We are built on the lines of bilateral symmetry, so every percept needs its balance, its other. By itself a percept can't be used. It must have its balance if we're to use it, embody it. We have to create, at every moment, the balancing neural event. Otherwise the stimulus perception falls past us, incomprehended, unembraced. This balancing act ( $\frac{\alpha}{\beta}$ ) is art's energy, art's deed among us — how we can sustain the enquiry, which is at the same time (the other time, *in illo tempore*) the quest.

This is why I suppose the poet is right to take seriously this odd work on which poets are engaged, a work made up of nothing but writing words down to answer times and places and persons who do not appear to be asking. But who are nevertheless the flesh of the question. Everything that exists is of the question. They need our answers, unending, in detail. And we need theirs.

22 August 2002

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Cool grey morning first in many days  
glareless and serene. Just wanted to let you  
know I noticed, am grateful, slept  
late. Almost seven hours. Earthling again.  
Marmoset sitting on my shoulder. Lies.

23 August 2002

## MONTRIOND

I want to be you  
your narrow bright eyes

I want to be your attitudes  
your skin

I am the Antarctic  
cycling towards my green season

it all comes true  
time gives no choice

this is not the world  
my world will come

because love is geology  
the final knowledge of earth

and where it moves  
everything moves with it

ponderous and slow  
carrying us

with mountains  
with lakes in them

green and cold

like one I know in France

like a secret shared.

23 August 2002

## QUO USQUE

How long suppose myself to be the weather  
when I'm just a clock?

Time bomb

disguised as a Valentine, a cardboard heart box,  
when you open the box  
suddenly it's summer and  
crows scream away crazy over the cornfield.

23 August 2002

## *NOSTOS*

In this country every hill  
is a volcano, every rose  
falls in the virgin's lap

every cloud is a grammar lesson  
the light prepares us  
but for what?

I call it love  
but you could name it just as well  
the miracle of Friday

or a glass of water on the table  
will evaporate completely  
if you leave it alone

bare wood empty glass  
the beauty lasts  
it happens

by itself  
and takes us with it  
we move smiling in our sleep.

23 August 2002

## AFTER THE WOODSTOCK READING

The fervent festivals  
mostly old

where is the young  
entablature

the tattooed graces  
looking down from heaven  
on all our swinking

we work so hard  
at this intricate play

delicate and fierce  
as paper dragon kites

dive at each other  
over the hill by the river

just up from Broadway  
foolishly so many

years ago why did we  
ever consent to time?

23/24 August 2002

## ODE TO SIN

*Peccavi*, and I have sinned.

The camels got there without me,  
I detested your cigars, inefficiency  
was my middle name, pronounced Jacques  
when I crossed the Rhine, always  
the wrong way, death cult,  
heading west. *Dnat* they used to call it,  
the thing that waits for you  
(even for you) on the other side of the river,

any river. Bunches of names.

Let me carve in a limestone cliff face  
all the names I sinned with,  
calling them out as I did, outrage in the night,  
arrow by day, the *knowing*  
that walks around the dark.

My sin was calling. Sin was my calling.

My sin was your names.

I let the men do what their dull dreams  
told them to do,  
working and money and building garages  
and fussing with animals, *je déteste ça*.

Which side are you on? they'd ask me,  
all I could do is smile and go on  
licking a rock or writing words in sand  
with my clean finger, hoping not to provoke them,  
their tiresome anger, their weary commissars,

I have no side  
to be on  
I would explain  
tuneful as I could,  
I have no side and won't ever be on,  
I was born off and off I linger,  
touching things and tasting things and telling  
only as much as I think you can bear  
of the terrible truth,

and when they left me  
I was free, I arose, I cried out your names  
fitting them together like the leaves I also  
wove onto the neighbor's trees  
so they would look out and argue  
is it morning or is it spring that's come?

But at night I was my own.  
When the moon was listening  
even though she's always distracted  
by the shapes of her gleam-work  
she sees returning  
from this sparkling earth  
still new as on the first day,  
it is only night still of the first day,  
I would sing a different tune,  
one she taught me,  
and tell the truth  
and the truth is just another kind of sin.

24 August 2002

The stone comes and talks to me.  
“You have paid too little  
attention to me.” In this country  
even the stones reproach me.

Why is that, I ask? “Because  
I am here, and so many  
just like me are here, gorgeous  
in our differences, and you

look only at one or two things,  
mostly the ones who walk around,  
and only a few of them, even,  
the ones you wanted from the beginning.”

25 August 2002

## The Program

There was a similarity  
in the dark  
and it found us,  
an ace in the deck  
that fell out and left  
all the other aces to rule  
the meaningless consequence  
of chance. This one  
on the other hand  
was the true ruler  
of all our matters  
that is the Essence  
of another suit, a pip  
we had never seen before,  
not red not black  
but a quivering sort of blue  
the way the sky goes peach  
at evening but still  
is the color of itself  
and the shape kept changing  
from bell to beast  
to something like a wave  
lifting something like a man  
and dropping him on shore  
where he trudged up  
towards us and then  
was a bell again, a barn  
on fire, a deer wounded

but stumbling bravely  
into the snowy birches.  
I slipped this card  
in your hip pocket  
and it runs you still.  
compelling me in turn  
to follow you forever  
wherever the card  
tells you to go.  
And you listen.  
We have always listened.  
The one instruction  
runs us both  
smoothly, even pleasingly,  
we are happy to travel  
deeper and deeper  
into the machinery we are.

25 August 2002

## **FAVELA**

There is time for this  
then that. Hovels  
on the hill. Habit  
of being happy.

In my next  
movie I show a woman  
sleeping by a window  
and what the moon does.

To us all.

Hours  
come easy with us,  
minutes are hard.  
The conscious sweet  
attention, dear.  
And then we.

26 August 2002



## THE SYSTEM

But it's an old system  
like a dead rose  
in columns of letters  
bent before the end

the paper or the screen  
goes brown, the words  
are the kind that fire  
leaves, ash alphabets,

they vanish from you  
as you read them  
and leave you only  
with what you call memory

the thing you always  
think you have but memory  
is a fire of its own  
or silver ink

tarnishes, leaches  
into the sea, that uneasy  
everything called mind.  
The unruly one

the out all night  
roisterer that smells  
of air and very late  
the quiet smile

of what's been forgotten.  
Even this information  
disappears so fast  
nobody can read it right.

26 August 2002

## **I WOULDN'T TALK THIS WAY IF I DIDN'T LOVE YOU**

Don't listen till you're ready to hear.  
Otherwise the little animals that run your brain  
will wear themselves out with playing  
hide and seek or Johnny on the pony  
deep in your miserable woods.  
I pity you because you are so me.

27 August 2002

## **LOVE**

So many hours and years  
getting ready for the simplest touch

a mouse knows how to do it  
with a mouse and we

exalted angelographers  
wish and hope and dare and touch and die.

27 August 2002

## LOVE SONG

I want to know you better than anybody  
but to whom am I speaking?  
Imagine now the telephone  
lights up a different room  
where all the voices sound the same.

Are you still you? Are you  
the one I want to know so well,  
are you even someone I can name at all?  
You are lost in what I say to you,  
lost in the design.

Diamond  
in gravel. A word too loud to understand.

27 August 2002

## THE WORK OF THE MIRROR

So many workers at the crucible  
each bringing ore. And you,  
cor meum, what have you brought  
except yourself, impostor metal?

But at least you burn it all up,  
no one know what good it does  
but you do it, no one knows  
more than you do about getting rid  
of what you carry, simple  
words for complicated feelings,  
let it go, a kiss to represent  
the Newest Testament.

Embody.

The work embodies. The work  
tells those who have a body:  
be in your body, be free  
in what you know or think you do.  
But what do you know  
gives you the right to tell them so?  
And have you ever smiled  
back over your shoulder and told me?

28 August 2002