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If I could sit down just once in your chair
I could fly the way you do
only I don't think you know you're flying
you just sit there saying what and why
but meantime you're sailing over me
like an asinine Chagall rabbi over
all the countries I am
do you know how big I am
how really important I am
you've been flying for an hour
and all you see down there is me
I am the lake that looks so pretty in the Minnesota sun
I am the field of red cattle shuffling along
I am the well a man bends to drink from
you get the picture but you just think
you're talking to some girl in trouble
if I could get in that chair for an hour
I could show you something
I'd make the world listen to me
make them eat my shit for a change
you too for a change, I wonder
what part of Poland did your mother come from
was she Jewish

She still is

I'm glad

to know when something's over
is not the same as finish it
I think it's time for me to go
I'm not getting anything from you anymore
I come in and tell you my dreams
but I know them already, they're mine
and you don't explain them any more
what good is that
you never tell me yours
you sit in your flying chair
and I get to watch your shadow on the ceiling
it's as if there are two of you
the one in the chair pretending to listen
but really just waiting for the moment to slip the knife in
and that other one on the ceiling
pretending to be just a shadow
of a man in an armchair
but it shows the truth the real thing
huge and hovering and dark and always above me
your little desk lamp shows the whole thing
ogre doctor over me

did you know the original language was Hebrew
not the Hebrew that Jews speak now
but something before that, and every language
comes from it and all of them distort the original
meanings God gave to the words

but Hebrew keeps more of the pure meanings
did you know that? there is a website
that explains this, and that's what we should be studying
instead of going to the moon and attacking each other
and fussing over crazy dreams, the real meaning of words!
because God said the words first
and the things came forth out of nothingness
just by his words and were there
suddenly, all the things and all the words,
just as he said them
like a man saying the name of his friend
and opening his eyes and the friend is right there
standing beside him to comfort him and touch
the words come first
and I read somewhere there was a rabbi once
who thought the words came even before God
and God too suddenly was just there
when someone spoke his name
but who said the word then
by whom is it we are spoken
that's what we should be trying to find out

Don't you think we do this a little
when we talk about what you remember
and what you dream
aren't we trying to find the original words
that spoke you, that's a nice way of putting it

or that you spoke, or that you heard
when you were very young
because there's not so much difference is there
between speaking and hearing
it's the same word isn't it
no matter who is speaking?
so this is the question of who we are
or being defined by what we hear

Did I tell you my new dream yet
no we've just been talking about language since you came
well all I remember is the end
I was or someone was
doing some work beside my house
and a few inches down below topsoil
we ran into something hard
so we cleared the dirt away
and there was this strange thing
a long wide tray like a baking pan
six feet long and three feet wide
blackened but not corroded
we took it up and it was empty
except for a notebook at the northern end
a school notebook the pages still clear
the book was dry and we could read it
but most of the pages were blank
a few scattered here and there through the book

had texts or formulas written on them
in different color inks some pages red some
black some blue but most were empty
only with those faint blue lines
what do you think it means?

how did you feel about it when you found the book
I leafed through it surprised that it was still dry and not rotten
the pages slipped open easily
and there was no smell

but how did you feel

I feel it's what the patient says that counts
I mean what is written down or declared
not all the empty pages
the doctor should be satisfied with what we tell

you felt that in the dream?
no I think that now

but what did you feel?

I felt an obligation
I didn't like the feeling
I felt an obligation to take the book with me

I felt an obligation
I didn't like the feeling
I felt an obligation
to take the book with me
for the rest of my life
fill all the empty pages
I didn't like the feeling
something is in the world
that won't let me alone
I had to fill the book with writing
and I have nothing to say
why do you think the book was underground
it was buried by a former tenant
past of a religious ritual
no I mean why do you think you dreamed about it under ground
if all your feelings were about the obligation
the book could have been found lying on a table
or come in the mail, why under the ground
I guess because we had to dig to get it
we? I don't know who was with me
but someone was maybe it was you, maybe
What was it you lost in Berlin
why do you ask how do you know about that
you mentioned it in passing the way we do
another slip you mean? a night without a day?
I don't remember telling you
it's not important

but what was it?

on the little blue bridge in Charlottenburg
I was standing staring at the official swans
it was a blue morning though with crows
shouting in the palace grounds by the Belvedere
I was leaning on the railing looking down
and suddenly I was conscious I let something go
not meaning to, conscious of having been unconscious
it was just a little paper bag I carried
stuff from the drugstore a box of band-aids
i saw it floating in a circle down below
and one of the swans came nosing at it
pecked it and the bag got wet and sank
I felt terribly bereft I don't know why
I didn't need the bandages I bought them
Just to be on the safe side I felt so sad so powerless
I can still feel it as we're talking
the feeling of my fingers letting go of the bag
all by themselves, why, why
do such things have to happen
am I so little in control of what I do
that my fingers have a life of their own
I was so scared I trembled, what else might
my body decide to do all by itself
while I'm busy with some swans
What was going on in your life that day?

nothing just stuff at the university
wandering around a lot, I had just come back
from a weekend in Poland
one of those cities where they still speak German
but the vegetables were better than Berlin
I walked a lot in the woods and farms
I remember stumbling and falling over a tree root
in a forest full of sunlight and I sprawled
on moss and mushrooms and loved the smell
of where I had fallen I just stayed there a while
and when I got tired of the ground I faced the sky
little patches up there blue and gold
I think it's a good thing to lie on the ground
it's like recharging your batteries
plus you can never fall any further
there you are precisely balanced
between heaven and earth at peace
what did you think about as you were lying there?
all kinds of things, strange you should ask that
my mother, I thought I heard her voice
telling me not to work so hard
and I wasn't doing anything all that time
just doing the minimum and having fun
but still she spoke, I mean I thought her voice
I don't know what else I thought about
does it matter, I was just so comfortable
sometimes I wonder why I ever got up again

it felt as if I had found my place
I could grow like mushrooms in the woods
so why do you think the lost band-aids led you here today?
I guess I expected to be wounded and they fell by themselves
so there's no way I could protect myself from getting hurt
rose petals don't cure slit wrists
that's something my mother used to say
what does that expression mean I never heard it
I think it means you can't heal real wounds with sweet talk
I mean I guess wrists are self-inflicted wounds
and rose petals are lover's sentiments
people are in pain and lovers try to bullshit them
nobody can know somebody else's pain
so it's up to us to keep from getting hurt
do you feel that what you've said is a critique
of psychoanalysis and me in particular
are the clarifying words we use, the insights won through to
are they just bullshit that doesn't touch the pain?
maybe it does mean that but I didn't mean it consciously
I do think I get some benefit from all this
it doesn't take the pain away
but it gives me things to think with
Did you see anybody in Berlin those days?
see o you mean sleep with, no actually
just an old friend from home who came for a few days
just a weekend on the Baltic
up in Rostock one hot summer

it was fun while it lasted
but we both had other things to think about
all I can say is what I see around me
when I close my eyes the words stop coming
it's so hard to talk in the dark
the words I say are like power leaking out
like that passage in the gospels where Jesus says
I felt my virtue go out of me
virtue once meant power once
but when I close my eyes my power grows
nothing is gained by talking
maybe I misunderstand this process or your motives
but I come to hear you not to talk
I want this to be what it says on the door
Come In & I Will Talk To You
I want you to analyze my psyche
I don't want to waste
my soul's strength
in talking, Christ
all these words
there's never an end to it
isn't it all right if I just listen
I promise I'll tell you the truth
and listen hard and take your guidance
just let me listen to you talk to me
Looking at the hand as it's in the act of writing
staring at your lips

those rare moments when you let me see you
and you are talking

tes yeux tes voix your eyes your voices
because I don't know who's listening or who speaks
I don't know anything about you
just the world

I mean what the world means
I mean I know what it knows
nomina numeri that's all
just names and numbers
no essences at all
we have no essences or
somehow float above them
drunk on difference
on what we think we are
eventually we pull ourselves together and go on
into the swampland of excuses
where your grandmother's run-down plantation
still keeps its catalogue of slaves
in the shack behind the rows of beehives
where someone manages to grow
what nowadays would be called natural remedies
coneflowers and burdock old people pluck
people trust their lives to you
you have no conversation for

since all we are at all is functions
with no essences, I keep talking
because I would be no one if I stopped

tell me more about the floating the going over
I mean we don't connect with what we do
a man gets there
gets out of his car locks the door goes away
do you understand
the machine is there but the man is gone
we move things around and they stay moved
but we are missing from this picture
I can't connect with anything I've done
so people hate me because I won't commit
but they don't commit either, they too
wear blue one day and red another
they too are footloose and flee the deed they do
or else commitment is a mood
a minute when you decide that time
is something you objectify
can spill your moment's will
out over all the years to come
but this is nonsense because we can't
remember what we ate last Saturday
because we are nobody in particular
and wear ourselves out grieving for an identity
our own, that cannot logically exist

we have no essence, we are not what we do
all we are is going on, to the next situation
all we are is going
I don't know why people have to call it running away

Tell me more about those people
the ones who say you run away
the ones who talk about commitment
it's so romantic to pin yourself down
like a corsage you wore to the prom
you have to hang around your neck ever after
withered and dry and smelling weird
a dead gardenia on a living breast
and won't death slowly sink into the skin
from all the withered flowers we love to flaunt
ya vas lyubil and all that love crap
o god they want to tattoo the mind itself
the soul too if we had a soul
the wrongest book I ever heard of was *Noble Essences*
there are no essences and they are not noble
I think I'm not answering your question am I
I hate to be pinned down of course that's what I'm saying
but you deserve an answer
this is a transaction after all between us
I mean we're in our separate cars
side by side on a no account road
and we're talking through the windows as we drive

neck and neck, drag race for a meager hour
you know what I mean, then the cars
will go their separate x-rays and be parked at Target
or snug in your girlfriend's underground garage
or are you married, strange I never asked
sometimes I forgot the simplest things
like what is the capital city of the moon

maybe you're just afraid of marriage
evidently, and I'm afraid of you too of course
which is why I keep talking
and imagine all my palaver is a kind of answer
or at least to someone like you skilled at listening
wise interpreter of what I don't know I'm saying
I feel you're trying to flatter me instead of talking to me
so I ask again about the people in your life right now
right now the ones who bother you about commitment
and yes by the way I am married
though I enjoyed the symbolism of the underground garage
so who is bothering you now?

it's not so simple as who
it's all of them
I see it in their eyes around me
the terrible bleak faded soccer moms
smug conservationists urban missionaries
they all want me to approve their fantasy

of permanence and values
house and heart and family and god
the drunks want it at 4 a.m.
stumbling back to the home they hate
and still they credit somewhere something's fine
the flypaper singing to the fly
it frightens me if you must know
because I only really feel like I'm myself
when I'm on the go, I am who I am
because I can leave the room at will
someday I suppose I'll be a suicide
just to keep moving

Do you do sports or athletics?
Christ that's an obtuse question almost insulting
you haven't understood a thing I said
what has sport got to do with it
when I'm on the move I don't mean movement
you don't have to leap through the door to leave the room
I feel you left me long ago
and just left your ears here to console me
but for Christ's sake come up with better questions than that
but if you really want to know I run (of course)
and ride when I can, I like the movement
and being up there but I don't like horses much
they're too big and too present if you know what I mean
but you'll never tell me what you know and what I mean

you'll never answer anything I ask you make me beg like a child

I notice you said Christ twice -- is he a presence too?

one time he was, like everybody else

I had to go through childhood

and childhood had churches in it

so I heard a lot about Jesus

and mostly liked what I heard

because he was always on the go

had no use for family, kept moving

wouldn't even stay dead in the tomb

not even the earth could hold him

wandered away into the sky at the end

leaving us all down here making up rules as fast as we can

while he was free

so if I were Christian it would be to imitate

the gypsy Jesus that I know, the prince of being gone

and that's a nice name for you too I'll think of you that way

and we're really near the end of our time

so I'll ask you one more time

about the people in your life right now

I want you to tell me the next time

I'll tell you the next time

and I warn you I'm going to keep asking

I don't have many answers but

my questions will go on forever

He died this morning
my friend a pianist
in Boston this morning
thirty years I knew him
was so good to me
he died alone I think
but we all die alone
when it comes down to that
nobody does it for me
I keep hearing in my head
the way he played
Satie's Three Fanfares
of the Rosy Cross
on my old piano
flame mahogany
so long ago he played
it slower than anybody else's
he played the true
sound of that mystical
celebration what sort of thing
I never knew it's been years
since I saw him what can I do
what can you do with a dying
with a dead friend you can remember
is that enough the whole
business of memorial

remember me I wish I could
hear him playing that

so many things I want to hear
Homer on the seashore
reciting the death of Hector
to a crowd of drunken men
I want to have a tape of
Milton dictating to his daughters
or Freud why couldn't it be Freud
he was alive when the Germans
were developing tape recordings
maybe somewhere there's a tape
of a session with Dr Freud
in London in actual English
you could hear him talking to the patient
you could hear him listening
maybe they did record him
maybe his voice got lost
when the war began this friend
of mine was from Texas
he hadn't seen his family in fifty years
he was the black sheep
too much music

I can't get over these losses these arrows
where are they coming from

so many seizures
swept away the long brown leaves of the willow
the glossy thick leaf fall of the maple

had you see him recently?
no, not for several years, he was shy
and didn't travel, his condition
first arthritis then cancer
kept him from moving
much out of his apartment
and I didn't often get there
of course I feel guilty I always
feel guilty that's what guilt is for
to feel it, and he didn't want
the young to see him old and feeble
the strange shame of the dying
as if death itself were somehow shameful
the last indignity after all the others

the 'distinguished thing' happens
and people sit around
uncomfortable with what's missing
and with what remains
I do wish I could hear him playing
Satie or Scriabin he was great at
or Ben Weber nobody plays him now