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TIJAX

Cut with knife
sleep anxious wake
after Walpurgis
nacht should
be May morning.
Some sort of criminal
running in our land,
quarrels in the air
on both sides of sleep.
Police gather in the street.
Barefoot the villain
runs, his own dream
intersecting theirs.
Nightmare. Magnolia
in full bloom. Dawn.
Everyone against everyone.
And that is a dream too.

1 May 2003
USING THE OTHER SIDE

of the mail. Mail moving around,
no one sending, no one reading.
Ear ache. Eye itch. The pieces
move through space
as if space needed motion,
Brownian movement, wedding
announcements, vitamins, entropy.

Information on its way
from no one to no one,
mail takes itself so seriously
envelope gourmet glue
government stamp
— a little insecure
our information
to require
such formalities
of registration,
it aspires
to inform
someone who has moved
leaving no forwarding address.
Forget the dog. We need
a mail catcher
to clear the world of homeless messages,
all these vague cries.

1 May 2003
BEING READY

I think it is ready for something
something that does not think
a friend ready to help

and no help needed, what is needed
can’t be helped, can only be swallowed
like water she’s held too long

in her mouth, tastes like herself, tastes
like nothing named, something
that does not taste itself, something that goes

and goes right down

< 1May 2003 >
The peace moves
more than space
I am worn with hearing
★★★★fall off the flag

blue gentian flowers
I found one in my fingers
when I grabbed the rock ledge
climbing France.

1 May 2003
FROM THE TIN MINES OF SLEEP

Here is your tin
it came from these islands
wordless men
bent to pull it free
cassiterite the ore
from which we come

Here is your tin
watering can
blind mirror
sconce for candles
Mexican

everybody likes the glitter
the hard ancient way
it gives the light back

grudgingly, like blind eyes.

2 May 2003
(from dream)
ANSWERING THE MIRROR

The glass rings
and you try to answer it.

The day turns into itself
and the mirror goes away
unbroken. You knew its name
so it lost its power
to make you feel one ay
when you lit an oil lamp
on the last night before it was now
o Sabbath Sabbath

and he still hadn’t come home.
Every boy penelopes his father,

years later makes every woman wait
as he was tormented by the gaunt
mica hours, sidewalk hours, waiting
by the car or subway steps,

so in balance she must mount the broken tower
and stare out forever begging the deadly sea
to give her practiced traveler back,
sure to come soon but never coming.
Waiting is what they do to each other
glib as forests hiding fur-bearing animals

the slender shapes that matter
coming not yet and the mind waiting

utterly convex with possibilities,
death and drunkenness and all betrayals

soft as Judas the loved one comes
finally. You look at the last face

of your desire. It says something
you will never believe again.

2 May 2003
AS IF IT

were after and a knife,
the special glue
pours from the horse’s eye

it holds the seen world
together, we
with our small eyes

cannot look away,
glued to what we see
are seen, obscene

a word of unknown parents,
as if it spoke marshland
over a sun so that the light

had to hide
in cat ice, the shiv of it left
after the thaw freezes

and the spikes of things that grow
tall by themselves and are silent
bear the lean collar of ice

the whole sheet of it held in thin air

2 May 2003
IN THE CARDS

The discard pile
from which your fate
protected you

you never had to be
the Jack of Clubs,
matter boy

or nine pink diamonds
stabbing your lady,
the wounds

of more than one Christ,
you are brilliant
in what turns up

the soft red Ace
on my green lawn
fallen, sunrays

lance the spot,
you swoon, you
lose track of the game,

what game,
there is only this
and I am you,

your last card left.

2 May 2003
SILVERY MISSIONS

Longitudinal appeals
a Central Asian democracy
oil butter horse

carpet mother
sierra of the middle
seam of the world

open now
reveal the gentle
slope along her kidney

amazing truth skin
try to hold so smooth
hip of the hour

an equation a catastrophe
gone already
fallen shadow

always a sort of smile
was there before you
echo of the visible

it lived in that place
lurking eye
in the rocks
you, you want
always to be somewhere else
do you know that about you

I am a sad language
telling you
because I speak only here

no matter where I am
just as you are
sand storm golden giving

light among the innocent.

2 May 2003
MY CITY

People are allowed to use
each other again.
Chelsea installation all the way west
copying sandstone in silk.
An old drunk sits on the iron steps
and remembers that it is May
now and somewhere
else are dandelions.

2 May 2003
Drink is not as common to abuse
among the old as once it was.
You’ve got to believe in yourself a little bit
to get drunk, otherwise you couldn’t stand the company

in that silent corridor of alcohol
snug and dangerous and leaving no shadows
down which you have to stumble always alone.
There used to be brave men and realist women

who could spend their lives drunk or on the way
but now the doubt is thick around the heart,
the glass falls from an almost sober hand.
We sit and watch ourselves young again TV.

2 May 2003
RINGS HER

fingers know
another without other

why silver numbers
count years

belonging to
someone self

not this
emergency land

dark turn
before sleep run

the light shouts
out of your hand

3 May 2003
THE OLD FRIEND

Claws of his feet maybe
stubble of his jaw
and you know he’s here
that unmistakable kiss

fervent the way a lighter
burns the thumb when you try
to light too many candles
you pay a price for light

for tulips on the windowsill
shadow of a bird passing.
Everything owns. A dream
without money is like a

girl without archeology.
Everything is where it is
and always was. Nothing
comes of it but always

arrives anyhow. He knows it
better than anybody, he followed
one road and it led everywhere,
I followed many to nowhere.

3 May 2003
HOMO SELDOM CERTAINTY

Random afterthoughts of Pleistocene
when nothing came before —
a soldier’s tale

I was a pilot in a simple war
nothing led me to kill
but the ease of doing so

arrow in the noonday sky
the bedspread quilt below
where people were just details
in a busy pattern soon erased,

who counts the stitches?
in the museum of time
I was a small eroder,
I left the world a little less.

3 May 2003
WHIM SOMETIMES BE THE DEEPEST FATE

Trim hips
for your age
I see you
in and out,
black dress
I watch
the Adriatic
over your
careful shoulders
I think we
are doomed to each other.

3 May 2003
RANDOMNESS

Randomness as policy
solicits bribes. It is like poetry
a species of forgiveness
before the act,

you beg to be beheld,
you stammer with demand,
ask it to make sense
when you never do.

Apology includes grosbeaks,
forget-me-nots take over the lawn,
the wind’s adventures
on the way to your house.

Always you. You pay up front
and they never come, you pay
for hope, to sleep at night
like a dog without a bugle,

a berry without a bog, a church
without a god, all that
flesh turns air to, breathe in
and suddenly a woman’s there,

a man you are. Cheated but happy
you wake. On your tomb: Everything
was sex. I only knew it later,
I thought I was just what happened
to me but I was someone else,
nobody in particular, just not me.
There are some lies it makes sense
to keep telling. The moon rises anyhow.

4 May 2003
EVERY LAKE

Every lake lies
open to the sky

there is a relation
no matter little

the water the eye
looks up the sky

looks down
and where this seeing

is happening
a line of more than sight

links earth to heaven
everywhere nobody home.

4 May 2003