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SECRET SOCIETY

The frank masons underline the house
with native stone if there is such a thing
--where was stone ever born?--
and let me know I've had enough for breakfast
though I'm still hungry,
no wonder philosophers grow old
so publicly,
all the conventions of desire
hide out in the closet of the ideal
like a shepherd hiding from his sheep.

Fall in love with me instantly
is what I was trying to tell you
but you kept listening, so I kept talking
and nothing ever gets clear that way
so I have to repeat myself now
in this rare moment of silence,
sea gulls, grackle jabber, sea wind,
all the sound effects of nature
naturing along,
fall, in, love, with, me, right, now.
But by this time you've gone to sleep
along with the rest of the population
dreaming of lost wallets and long
waves walking up the beach on human feet.

17 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

SECRET SOCIETY, 2

I really did belong I mean believe
I mean belong,
There really is a load of interesting
historical material (gold, actual,
valuable, yours for the asking)
buried near Rennes-le-Chateau
and more of it in Saint-Sulpice
and even more right here
below your house
wherever you live (as Whitman would
have nobly generalized),
the mines are public but the mind is mine.
Darling, I'll tell you all I've learned
in all these years, sea foam
and tobacco and strawberries,
is that a clue, do you care
what I do to you
along the way to the Ballcourt of the Dead
close to the Stadium of Popular Dissent,
come share my wealth, come do it now,
all our dreams make one sodality,
sorority, tumble in ecstasy,
a flower like peony though very small
if you close your eyes you think you're real.

17 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

STARRY NIGHT

Ophiuchus east.

Auriga. Sagitta.

Names become
us after time.

1.

A ramble in St James Park
the only innocence
is what the body feels.

Do you think Light has a body
and that the stars are it?

2.

Face east at midnight.

The larger island

hangs from heaven.

The pleasures

of island intercourse

are close to the ground.

3.

By twisting letters

of the Hebrew alphabet

with marsh flowers,

mauve, the mallow,

and brewing a tisane

--noxious—from jasmine petals, jasmine leaves she made a man

want to be her husband

who will wonder

to this day Why her,

why not all the others?

Stars, stars, so many.

17 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

THE WATCHERS

The watchers at the Circumstance divide
in parcels of intermittent energies:
the Lass that Loved a Sailor, the Loss that Lived in Mail,
the Lust that Loosed her Veiler, the Boston Whaler,
Bleak Greek, Sanskrit Semaphore, the Yale Eleven,
the Towne Crier, Empathy and Arbalest, these ten

and not eleven, that's all we got when God
made up the numbers and divided unity
into countable packets to befuddle us
(deus sive diabolus, nescio quem)
and the bricks began to bake themselves
and helium began to happen.

Egypt came next

by secular reckoning but I'll tell you the truth,
it was all Lilithry and wine and poppy juice,
nobody went anywhere in those days,
why, distance hadn't even been invented yet,
we all huddled lovey in a nearby dream
called Glamour or the coast of Donegal
with milk-skinned lasses and oaten swains
and parrots calling papagai! among the palms,

I kid you not. I'm trying to make it easy
for both of us, this birth of mathematics
so you don't have to sit up all night in spring
cramming for your cheesy calculus exam,
you know your limits already, your slopes,
your proper deviation, the meager differential

that illuminates all your deed in such glory

because you are you. You. Your prince
or princess, I'll never be sure which,
numbers never tell me about that, gender
is the cross I bear that runs athwart
the omnivorous number system with a grid
of furious denials. Sex is pure rejection.

18 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

TODAS MIS CRUCES

All my crosses
set up beyond the mountain
where space alone could bear
the energy of needing you

the way I do—nails and thorns
and whips and spears, what strange
suits your cards show, o Lord,
your gypsy deck that ransomed us.

18 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

ORACLE

Write till the pen runs out of ink
then write what's left to say
against space. Fly till you run out of sky
and fall into all-denying brightness,
the noble *nada* overhead.

That's what the fishermen are saying
smoking cold cigarettes in the dank boat
on the hummocky ripples of the Sound
usually so smooth now corduroy
as if someone far away had slapped the sea.

18 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

SIMPLICITY

as in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*
a paradigm of human motive who
will rule the small world of desire
within the infinite world
of things as they just are

ownlessly their own, still,
luminous, always within reach,
never sated, never needy,
to hand and never missing,
yours as much as mine,

yet we bestir ourselves to seize
manipulate, pilot into port
what needs no steersman, guide
what is always there
safe in the garden of itself
all days and always autumn
rife with harvest, always spring
with green weather, hope
hardly needed since all's found,

I imagine all this shown
on a rainy morning
in the concave
of a bright silver spoon,
the human images aligned
snarling and ennobling and orating
in all their colors,

all their meanings, very
clear and upside down,

before I stir my tea, that other
weather, that interfered with
universe of stuff I made.

18 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

THE BURDEN

sometimes the eyes
wait for a darkness
that knows how to heal

sometimes the silence
comes up the hill
between the mowers

and the wind, sometimes
a breath moves on my hand
so that the skin of it

is all full of listening
but what then?
In a dark cathedral

in a distant city
a woman is sitting
at this hour

watching the shadows
move through the hours
touching the Stations of the Cross

the early ones
where Jesus is able to walk

and goes along

uphill always

carrying something heavy

through the baffled spectators.

18 June 2003

Cuttyhunk

MERGER, RAPTURE

The govt sells off our land,
we won't need it after Rapture
the govt eats our Social Security,
use those trillions now
and give them to deserving Christians,
they won't need cash after Rapture,

after Rapture only sinners stay
leave them to sort out what's left,
doesn't matter, they're all, all of them,
going to hell and by eating their security
the govt just brings hell closer,
make it easy for everybody.

The govt knows the end is coming
the end is close, Rapture reeling
even now down the sky to bring
good church Christians to Reward,
get them used to Paradise,
give them all the sinners' money now.

19 June 2003

This was my dream this morning, alas, I'm honor bound to report. And did seriously believe, waking, that Mr Bush fully and consciously expects the Rapture soon, and is persuaded that his government is fated to preside over the Last Days.

=====

When the govt gets into your dreams
there's no reliable cure.

Sometimes staring at a spot near the sun in the sky
until your eyes water
or counting the waves rolling in at the Barges
can help a little. Or being civil
to strange dogs. Maybe.

You've got to wait the bastards out.
Let time flush your crankcase,
let love again invade the sacred precincts
where even Reason does not venture,

the quaking aspen grove, the night.

19 June 2003

=====

Cure me, waves
despite what Heraclitus argues --
what does he know?

Fish *are* holy.
Ask an Egyptian, ask a Tibetan.
Anything that breathes can make it happen.

19 June 2003

=====

sun sheen on quivering pewter --
more sun on the sea than in the sky,
a little rent in cloud the whole sea glaring.

19 VI 03

=====

Where do you get the best reception?

In bed.

Why don't you go there and stay?

I don't always like the voices at the other end,
the miracle workers, the fishers of doves.

19 June 2003

WALAM OLUM

they claim is imposture
some Raffinesque cooked up
or was imposed on to accept

but I say your Lenape
hips your blond habit

every text by being written down at all
shares Authenticity, *exousía*,
truth naked as an ear of cord
after the shuckers' red rough fingers
play. The word saves.
Now save the word.

2.

Everybody has to read the morning.

Your father was someone else's son ---
that's all you have to know.

3.

Planlessly causal
the young waves
arrive from the old sea

of one substance
same with the sea
--a wave is how water
behaves --

homoousion, the same
nature, the same
kind of being,
proceeding from the father
and the son because
herself a daughter, a debtor
like the rest of us,

no beginning, she's brighter,
truer surely -- a breath
is how blood behaves --
the holy spirit -- *sophia* --
is innate wisdom,

you can't get born without being wise.

19 June 2003

MARINADE

pronounce as French is
what they called the hot wet wind
came in from Nice
and soused the Lubéron
in breathless sweatiness and
then the mistral would come
shivering through the roof tiles
and letting men breathe again,

all the wind by which they live,
men, while women in the silence
that is theirs, the cenacle,
the windless place where all is breath,
breathe the naked truth until men work.

Xs and Ys, that's all it seems,
the mist from nowhere that smokes
our fitful chromosomes and
makes me almost you
but something's missing
I'll only sometimes think I understand.

19 June 2003

Cuttyhunk,

in sudden fog

TAMERLANE OR GENGHIS KHAN

or folk like that, martinis deftly balanced
as they scimitar their way through hordes
of ordinary us, smiling at their minions
and frowning at the rest of bloody humankind,
with big mustaches,
with Polish neckties sometimes
or Bavarian green hats
with capercaillie feathers in them—one of the few
instances where z is pronounced y,
I'll explain it some other time,
it's all just spelling—well, these
conquistadors on horse or elephant
come waddling in to what we thought
was ecumenical, the world as such,
the civilized, the afternoon.

And they can hack it too, somehow,
murder must be a university
of its own, full of specialized awareness,
chattering blue jays of information,
long corridors of sheer causality
dingy in dim electric light,
smelling of Pine-Sol,
death is the only certain archive anyhow,

read me and weep.

So as I say these governments on hoofbeats

come sashaying in and rule us fine,
no wit remitting of tax or tithe,
just as mulcting as ol' George or Tony or
any other local Caesar and
now the aftermath begins,
business as usual, but speaking Turkish
or whatever it is they come palavering,
I don't understand a word of it
but it's all theater anyhow,
we all get the drift. It's over,
the old thing. The new one tastes the same
only spoken in Mongolian, that's what it is,
you knew it all along, why didn't you clue me in,
here I've spent weeks learning Arabic,
supposing it would make them look
upon me with favor, curling
almost like a smile those
lamb-fat glistening lips.

19 June 2003

HOT SAUCE

in local Portuguese is
Molho Picante,
mull you pecan Che
you tardy rebel

I don't know where
death took you
when he came
disguised as everybody else

surely not to Fair Haven
of the seaplanes, not
Seamen's Bethel a bissl
after Father Mapple,

Che, you fashionable cadaver,
you bearded reproach,
you poster boy of all that's bad
bad bad until we get it right,

you're not so far
from this bottle of Gonsalves
hot sauce with the arms
of Portugal aloft

and five hot red peppers
on a yellow ground
signifying the wounds of Christ
who came off better in his bout

with death but we're still trying.

19 June 2003

CHILLY MORNING

barefoot she treads
the sidewalk to the garage
brrr I remark and she
says Isn't it

there is a predicate misplaced
in this conversation
like a preacher who steps down
after half an hour sermoning
realizing he forgot to mention God

19 June 2003

Cuttyhunk