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her mutinous lips capsize a slim canoe
he wants her in his punchbowl after the big game
through leaves he slithers up her windowsill
she weeps over the mansards of old Paree
the field marshal’s monocle hazes with tears
she slides down the banister and lands on the maid
father suffers a coronary in a house of ill-fame
welcoming police a landlady dries her hands on her apron
shy they sit on the curb and share some soda pop
headlines scream the kid is on the loose but where
you know they’re waltzing the way her ballgown swirls
faster faster the motorboat pursues the river pirates
scrubbing the floor on old knees for him for him
magnanimous mistress withdraws so lover can attend sick wife
dog held onto his cuff till rescuers hauled him from quicksand

(31 May/1 June 2001)
As if there were two of us in the room
the candle flickered from one to the other
saying what fire always says, has been saying
all the roman years and we can’t read it
too simple too quick too personal.
Try harder next time. Really be alone in the room
as if I were really here, not half here
and somewhere else where you are
sand or scree or scour of streets,
tumult of identities I try to quiet
into one namable person and hold.
It never is. All fire means is change.

1 June 2001
Exalt the difference
he likes words beginning ex-

they’re good for breakfast
they crackle over coffee he
can see Mount McKinley in the distance
the lead-glazed skylights of the Latin Quarter.

1 June 2001
Orient is how a compass leans
against the alphabet of air
until it spells how late it is
late enough for the sun to rise
the one that hides inside a body
same body that speaks it one by one
endless rosary of named persons
no one without a name. North
is what it says, hope
is that way too, a chain of amber beads
so sign of ending, pull
one out of the sea each night
easy as anxiety a nude day comes.

1 June 2001
THEOMETRY

Of a small
to begin with
drug sometimes
takes up no more space
than lightning in the sky

soon gone
an amazement of music
cosines of a fortunate fall.

o felix culpa
at what angle
down heaven’s glacis slipping
did God become man?

1 June 2001
I see the dark lowering face of the man
curly black semitic hair and say I used to be you
and you used to be me
everyone I notice
everyone that comes to mind

is someone I used to be, will be again,
and we both belong to what we see.

2 June 2001
Truth hides behind the moon

but the moon’s enough for me
the sin the surfaces

licking the window pane
I taste the other side

I kiss the throne
some royal body rose up from.

2 June 2001
To be a Lama is to sit
At the bedside of a sleeping child
Sick in the throes of nightmare
Giving signs.

2 June 2001
KTC
The cycle of agitations
supports the heart. Sans ça,
the chest vibrates instead
to the vagrant orgasm of the planet
geology jive. But when you care
the motions of the thing you care
become your moves. All motion
not so much emotion. Blue
the way a bottle is
its glass smashed, washed
centuries by indifferent seas.
Gentle now on your palm
not so different from someone’s eyes.

3 June 2001
Full of certainties
the manipulators
wait for star dust

a world full of fall

everything promises
thunder delivers

hail rare as triple plays
pelts inexpert skin.

3 June 2001
It’s not that everything comes from you
(everything comes from you)
but that without you
nothing would make sense
when it came down, came round,
came to town

the way the circus did in spring
or crocuses or music
happens in the heart of noise
to make us hear

and who was she, anyhow,
before you were here?

No one. A circus
without elephants or trapezes.
A flower without a single thing to say.

3 June 2001
woke to men tearing the porch down
moving the rhododendron hope it lives

Cherry Orchard feelings banistered in the hope of new

new is a Moon God
always showing up the darkest hour
coming and recoming. Teaching new.

4 June 2001
BREEZE BLUE QUICKNESS TO EVERYTHING

Do I have enough to make a man
out of that clay

and what sacred tri-liter or tetra
grammaton

would I mark on whose forehead
my own brow hot with ache

who? Catherine in overripeness
am I talking about you

Mrs Blake? Plastic boxes
seraphic animates

a dead pope his face under thin wax
more or less still thinking

and Sainte Thérèse in Armagh now
her poor bag of bones and pus

a blessing.

4 June 2001
Boston
Bless me brick
For I am island

A spit of rain
From a far mouth

Mysterious peonies

4 June 2001
Boston
AZALEAS

A balcony makes love to the sky
Later gives soirée invites the moon

4 June 2001
Boston
TRIAGE

Triage, morning’s a

or boulevard, bombarded
middleweight who’s left to

the sun makes old men stroll

Three girls on their way
to Latin wait

for what comes from *omnibus*
black pants white pants blue

I can’t understand any language at all.

5 June 2001
Boston
NEW BEDFORD

Another century has passed
And still has sun sliced sharp over harbor
And the breakwater holds
Still hope the city
All the stars in the sky.

5 June 2001
ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE AZOREAN MARITIME HERITAGE SOCIETY

sidewalk café below the old New England Button Yarn works
now one of the dozen historical must-sees in this museumized quartier
I still love cobblestones and nobody can make corn muffins anymore

5 June 2001
New Bedford
I dream of a seagull
feather found
marking a page in a tall old book
and then I know I’m not dreaming

not dreaming at all, just no book
no feather
but I am full of finding.

5 June 2001
New Bedford
Looking out at the sea
after the collision of two ships before us
and helping them hobble back to port

strange crowded corner of an ocean
I know a thing or two about my life before this

how I have been a king deposed
a senator shot down on the steps of the parliament
a pope in trouble
and seven hundred thousand no-account lovers
not great or vile enough to be remembered

and certainly a priest
who raised his oily fingers
christward with a cup to give
wine’s blood back to who’s lord.

5 June 2001
MS Alert II
The island of at last

a mirror lifted beyond a vineyard
and a clown’s face in that glass

and the sea is all laughter, a clown
I never called you a clown, dear god, always
a cloud or a cough in the night
like leopards pussyfooting behind Darjeeling

but it doesn’t matter what I call you as long as I call

a cry
　like one thing in the mouth of another,
anything works,
　all comparisons are valid, unconvincing

simperingly true.
So a cry like a gull tumbling out of the sky I shout up to you.

5 June 2001
Cuttyhunk
It might be an architrave
essayed by Ruskin, glorioled by Talmudists,

commentary makes the Lady glow.

It might be a yellow dog asleep in the sun on the sand

anything you see leads anywhere

the driftwood in your hand
writes short answers it pokes in the dirt.

5 June 2001
Cuttyhunk
Have I forgotten how to write
will the page of earth not lie flat for me
and let my opera roll across it
letter after letter juggernaut of song

mailman bring me some love in the mail
from the true place she wrote it
and the simple box she slipped it in
an ocean full of other people’s histories

5 June 2001
Cuttyhunk
A recluse
Alone
With whatever
Happens
The holy

5 June 2001
Cuttyhunk