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flutes and horns the sacred hollow
bone at the core of music

sumus quod audimus

Already, teenager, Opus 7, he knows
how to unlock the granary of the heart

that rat, that grand Bavarian rat,
makes me feed on my feelings

the more we eat the more we feel
the more we feel the more we are

live a hundred years
found being on being alone)

my bone. Ma ruche.
You hum. You whom I have desired
since first I heard your sound

(red leaf alder, yellow elm)
le roi des aulnes

birds streaking across the veldt
strouthoi, ostriches, sparrows,
strouthoi haul her chariot
down the air, hurrying towards love
with quizzical aureate bouquets,

but if it could only
sound, othernesses of sand,
the desert made
to craze with roses, all that,

sum, sand, sound, Sammlung
aller Samen, tous les semences
all the seeds heaped together
for the air itself
    is a seed

    the breath
    knows how to plant

    it everywhere.

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le cabiers

slim book in which
the woman knows how to inscribe
slow thoroughly the exact
name of everything she sees

held in relation, all clusters, all the harmonies

and this book becomes the same as fate,

    the gods read it
    and puzzle out
the intricate syntax of the human heart
the darkest hardest grammar of the world.

8 November 2000
Bronze door freemasons the Judges
line up on their littered bench

the prosecutor is speaking Finnish and too fast
rocks back and forth his heels squeaking:

“Have you ever noticed how a criminal
smiles like a cello? How the moon
sneaks up through the raspberry bushes one night
and over gorse another? What shall we
do with time?”

Isn’t number
itself the crime?

“Have you ever
tasted heather?

fetal heartbeat measured
on the pulse of a deer stretched
over the chasm
between one person and another
leaping,
foreleg there and hind leg here,
the world’s retreating, have you?”

Leather? My lawyer rises to resist.

“Linenfold wainscot, neatsfoot oil,
estrag of plover!”

I almost believe him.
I am guilty and I know it,

I confess
I want you, I dream of the occasion,
how could I refute the accusation?

“This man (he turns to me) is Mercury,
how could he help but turn
her Gold into his bleak alloy?”
Tarnish is his native language,  
yet how bright he!”

Almost believe him.  
The jury’s eyes are weeping,  
I am guilty of their feeling,  

Drumbeat,  
snug black skirt, tie pin, pleading,  
guilty of being what I am,  

of wanting  
the one or two things in the world I’m not,  

easy now, pastorale, lento, smoothly,  
let no man outlive his muses, no  
mercy, maestoso, the court is sleeping.  

That’s what music does, we all forget  
the dreary morning when the president  
seizes the angelic world and bends it  
onto the wheel rim of the actual,  

vapid gesture, godly motive,  
I throw myself on the imagination of the court  

as if a bird without a feather flew  
down the sea sky and transcended  
the simple earth on which it might have landed.

8 November 2000, Olin
Brahms is greater than ————, but not as good.

The sun rises from a cello
and the steel of the sky
is etched by words.

Winter in north Germany,
everybody loves somebody,
the world is wonderful,

not always the right one,
the world is terrible,
terrible the unreciprocated light.

8 November 2000, Olin
So we came back home
and who knows where that is

a stag and a shadow
a tree with no crow

and the house was warm
rooms spilled out in lamplight

kitchen ants asleep
thousands of people in the closet

a smile is a cellar
go all the way down for deep wine

no bottle holds
we drank from one another

everything is a cup
everything knows what we don’t know

the house knows
where death is hidden

where the crows stands
vague looks they give us

baffled between food and fear
a tree with no shadows

a moon that gives no light

9 November 2000
Get your graphic systems
cogged on Arcturus
close aligned. We find
the world every night

under our tongue,
spit it out, olive pit,
star by star until
the blackness stings with light.

9 November 2000
Tivoli
I am waiting for me
at the end of the candle

wait for the guilty party
deep in the forests of desire

suddenly the thing he wants
looks him in the eye

it fires and he dies.
That’s the song

any candle sings
no wonder the moths listen

tonight’s no different
a hint of rain

Thursday or Friday
a falling government

a woman on her way
to or back from Spain.

9 November 2000
Tivoli
Too many close in the closet
they scream all night the herds in there
troupeaux de Naiades the mountains rise there the water falls

from under the door a shallow river runs
blue or yellow it tastes of rust
dervish weather in there, you bury your head in the pillow

the soft thing for the ears your mother made you
you bury your dead in your dream
the closet in the hall that never opens never opens

this is what every child knows and you forgot:
all the dead people live inside the furniture
they are pine and oak they are plastic

all night they come closer and closer to you
where you sleep you try to sleep
your eyes measuring the chest of drawers the chair

waiting paralyzed for the closet to open
and it doesn’t matter what comes out, what counts
is that they come to take you in.

9 November 2000
IGUAÇU FALLS

I watch you fall

your falls
are legion

are legends
I dare repeat

to me,
daring myself

to fall as far as you.

9 November 2000
Tivoli
WHY DANCERS LOVE ME

Because I am big I am solid I stand
At the center like the center of something
Not too scary and not too far. I am here.
Whatever I am I am here. Dancers love me
Because my mind is smooth as their bodies,
Because my mind is supple and quick as their limbs
But doesn’t hurt anybody, a dancer
Never hurts anybody, why is that, everybody
Hurts somebody why doesn’t she? Or he?
Because I sit still and watch them
And they can feel me watching. They can hear
Their movements and their grace
Come out of my mouth as words. They can see
Themselves in me — their moves my stillness,
Their leaps my words, their rhythms
The silences from which I move. Because
I move them as they move me, mysteriously.
We don’t know why, we look at each other
And we cry or something or we laugh
And don’t know why. Dancers love me
Because they don’t know who I am, and that being so
It’s all right for them not to know who they are too.
They are nobody, I am nobody, they dance,
I answer. Dancers love me because I answer
And when I do they realize suddenly their
Dance has been a question all the while.

9 November 2000
What if the seeds
of an old woman walking her dog
were the same as sex?

What if the sky could actually see?

10 November 2000
CARBARN

we said,
Eliot Street we said, back of Cronin’s,
and who remembers all those ashes now

memory is the fæces of thinking —

there must be some other mindfulness,
Mnemosyne,

not about storage but about tomorrow
(but tomorrow is the fæces of today)

I don’t know what I want the other thing to be.

10 November 2000
Praxilla was singing

And there are things that can exalt us
there are clocks too and cucumbers
to make sure we stay on earth
and stop screwing around with heaven

10 November 2000
Give me your word, dark afternoon!
First we’ve had in weeks,
these clouds must be with wisdom stored,
stuffed with sagesse, azimaths of glory
broken over the secants of the world,
we breathe pure light
undistracted by the brightness of the sun

lake light limb light eye light veil
floating down —

—Who wove you?
   Miriam, the Madeleine.

—Who may wear you?
   ... you. I am an echo
   in light
   of what you speak
   in dark.

—In darkened theaters?
   Art is only suicide.
   Inside your thinking
   the dark is
   it is my nature to recite
   and by speaking
   illuminate like a winter morning
   when you haven’t slept
   and from the Smith-9th Street station
   you see the city you must answer to,

—But what if I don’t think?
   I wasn’t talking to you,

My cloth is meant
And unmeant,

It clothes the naked
And makes the clothed look nude,

My cloth is meant
Instead of thinking

Or deep inside it
Where the images are stored

Old yellowed ivory in the dingy attic
You hear a Viking rainstorm on the roof
Only a foot above your young head,

You were born here
You will never understand

Slates with no chalk
Rain without a mouth.

10 November 2000
ST

St exalted st come round
my corner you are my stoop
st seat st soft step sit on me
everything means another fucking thing
a thing

know what we can
and for the rest
leave it to the skin

the worst that can happen then is leprosy
and then some Jesus comes along and says Be clean

be clean and holy

be something else

*

I don’t know what I believe some days
Some days the cars make more sense than people
The smell of my father’s Pontiac
Is not the same as sunshine in the Dolomites
But both can make me puke with nostalgia

my body heaving to be some other place some other time

When the only time there is
Is this body itself, le corps même
not borrowed from some old poem
born with me born as me

the space from which I come

And the only space we own is this thing we stand in
pale puppet with such worshipful thighs
is that it, boss?
is that the thing you meant me to say
the thing you invented language to inscribe,
the other, the other with its soft fluffy tail its wings on fire its iron hands
is this it even now
this thing I say
this thing you make me say
the animal on its way
to being, even it,
to being other than it is,
the Other’s other — could that finally be me?

11 November 2000
I could have been trying to listen to myself
But it was Napoleon and Sherlock Holmes instead
Like a crazy man hearing voices from the furniture

So I know some names I never knew before
And why the Rue de Rivoli is called Rivoli
And what the cleavage pattern of a diamond is

But I don’t hear anything talking from inside me
In the damp grey basement gymnasium my Athens
Unless this is wit and these are muses, words alone

That slip along my brow and my hands (how?) hear.

11 November 2000