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Revising August
a good thing
for September

I’ll hold my breath
and watch the ink

I made a video
called “Thrill” or “The Thrill”
it shows bright
green paint drying
in sunlight and cloudlight

I offer this to you now
ten minutes long statue
of a soft attention

fall
into this yielding

1 September 2000
the light that sifts through leaves here
has too much to say

I have to listen faster
among so many maples.

1 September 2000
We are allowed to talk about the weather. Whenever we have come together, the ski boots stacked roughly, steaming in the corner,

the blue aquavit glimmering like gas flame in frosted glasses bla bla bla

a memory from the future chilled me to the

where the bone would be if there were anybody home

in me, just listen to the snowflakes ringing the doorbell to an empty room.

1 September 2000

(revised to Peter Dawson singing “Down Among the Dead Men.”)
Then let me be nearer than I can
a dreadnaught in a bathtub — you let
me scuttle down between you thighs
as if all my steel were nothing, my architecture
just a dream to taste your skin

*in this world iron floats*
that is what’s so strange about the hour,
time is a viscous kind of sea
where past and future drown together.

1 September 2000
SABBAT

1.
Do you spell tact
With one knife or three?

2.
Embrocation.
Invocation.

Or how sex is wasted on the young
How the old are wasted on sex

There is a complaint here
To be lodged
Against the Demiurge
The inefficiency of God.

3.
Just because the snow never melts on the
   Beautiful cone of Mt. Fuji
Are we supposed to like it
And put up with leprosy and warlords and love?

4.
The world is the flesh is the devil
And I am hell and you are God.
Now that we’ve got that straight
Which way is out?

2 September 2000
Trying never to be less beautiful than I am we,
an interruption, partner, to a glass of music

‘comforts and helps’ because these silken sleeves
teach mandarin manners and a cross

stabs down (everything longer than it’s round
shall be a sword, every ball a Pentateuch)

piercing the infidel terrain. Marxista, move over,
there’s room for two of us in this mistake,

protest, anti-test, your couch is angry, let things lie,
fly, sudden intercourse with the shadow

mist on the moon, so he raved along his way,
bad as Bach, holding his art firmly behind him

all the way back to the Eve Rest, the soft
southern comfort of the body’s soul, animal

vegetal and mineral, a proud lump in hose,
meeting the cast off meanings of his mind.

each one fit to marry and he did April in Calexico
kissing each one’s glamorous tattoo.

2 September 2000
Consonants?
Cormorants, adrift in an immense sea.

Tree?
Thee, alone, abaft an apple.

Bracket?
A racket cheating the indecisive.

Gamble?
Ramble in the forest late at night.

Stone?
Love’s tone, unforgiving, never leaving, hard.

2 September 2000
The ghost of the old barn
I see clearly in the shimmer mist
this hot wet day uphill

where it always was till
an afternoon bulldozer downed
and buried it and no more

just trees and shrubs that chaos
we call nature

and the ghost of a barn.
Making me cry.
Of course for all lost things, but Christ,
this one, just this
harmless ruin,
woodchucks lived under it

and an unseen woman coughs nearby.

2 September 2000
In times to come, when all the dead are alive again or never, there will still be poets, and each poet will have another. Bonded, the twain will read and revise each other’s work.

A given poet has to write, let’s say, seven hundred lines (Eve of Saint Agnes, say) in order to get — scattered through the grass — the couple dozen lines or flowers that change the game, change our lives, forever (“lucent sirops tinct with cinnamon” it might be, or “silver snarling trumpets”). All those many lines, interesting, focused for a moment then swept away, all those other lines have to be written so that these few lines may arise, lofted on the wave of saying, sung also on the zephyr of the poet’s inconstant afflatus, one thing leading to another forever, till finally this wonder speaks.

But there should be no need for others to plod wearily through the tin forests and aluminum foil jungles on their way to the silver and gold. That’s where the Bonded Other poet comes in, revising and deleting and straightening the path, till all that’s left are arrivals without journeys, homecomings without partings, resurrections without deaths. The Bonded Other will work like Spicer’s abortionist, slicing out anything he takes to be inauthentic, or like the jealous husband banishing from the household anything that reeks or reminds of Raoul.

Each poet will do that for the other. Poet marriages will be arranged by the Supreme Sanhedrin, seeking mates intolerant of the specific bad habits of one another. Old poets will bond with new, traditionary rhapsodes with scofflaw originals, to rinse out rhetoric. Or raise it to a rapture — after all, even music sounds good once in a while.

But what will happen when my real dream comes true, when every human is a poet, hence none is so labeled, and poetry is the revised standard version of our whole speech. And language dances.

2 September 2000
LATE SUMMER

Morning. Comfortable enough, mid 70s, huge humidity

but I know if I move a muscle I’ll burst out sweating.

Sit still and wait it out. Most of life is sitting still and waiting for the catastrophe we bring by moving.

2 September 2000
FLORIDA

Mangrove pod
brought up by a dolphin
from the bottom of the bay
and placed in a Lama’s hand

thus I have heard
and held the pod myself
the Lama gave to me
I put it on a shelf

to see
the miracles of
what manages to happen
as if naturally.

2 September 2000
it is intimate it has tines
it forgives me

it turns around a big wheel in the sky
the river shows its reflection

of course everything’s a mirror
what did you think

and that’s a mirror too

*there are only two things in this world:
*a tool or a forgetting.*

2 September 2000
Be a part of me
I’m sad of going
the red sheen
lives into me from your embrace

a silver circumstance
a dance among intimates who
yet yield us enough space
for you to be you

cloistered if only for an hour
in my adoration

deserts and mountains
postcards from the womb

these quick words that flash
across the mind
like a gleam of skin

something you said.

3 September 2000
Put this in your heart and heat it
Spirits of ambergris, sea gull feather
For the oil of ocean lodged between the nibs
And blue caramel crockery, your aunt’s
Secret refinery in Abu Dhabi, cars
On fire on Grand Concourse. I want the truth,
Will you stay with me, trap my tongue
Between your legs till I learn to talk.
The smug rigidities of science, smug
Calendars of surface history,
In fact we don’t know when anything was,
Is, or how far today has come from yesterday,
That synthetic memory of a failed abuse
You live to tell. For here we are at last,
Humble as ink. What can we do
Together that we didn’t do apart?
Sage weather, cupcakes of wet sand.

3 September 2000
Getting closer at least a
Chance of
Rotten weather the kind you
Like you bored conver-
Sationalist of atmospheres
For Christ’s sake why
Do you always need something happening?
If you take off the garment of the weather
What’s left? That’s
What I’m trying to say.

4 September 2000
1. Accordingly, the strafed funicular
Drops its eggs along the valley.
Not just one stream runs down there
But dozens in love with the valley floor
The groove of wet. Halcyon in heaven
Or the Hyades for instance can be met
On firm earth too, this twosome place,
This little deity we run around on
Sucking and spewing all day long.
And then the blue night comes
And we’re ashamed of all the lights we blend
To flesh our need. Bedraggled witness,
Bed rags looped around her legs, stirs
And bids me well come in her midst —
Dim as I am I’m closer to you than any star
All those bright importuners outside.

2. We were discussing snakes, the vestigial
Legs of the python, the way his boa rested
All day long from labors we could not conceive
Or maybe did not want to know what business
—Mental trafficking, contemplation, sheer
concentration on lost certainties — could keep
an animal so weary all day long. I asked him,
you’ve lived with the creature all these years,
what in fact does he think about, what’s on his mind?
I wouldn’t want to live with such a sphinx
Myself. And yet we do, all of us, each man’s heart
A bag of riddles and a hot dry skin of doubt.
3.
Alike in squirming, we repose when we can.
But some issues never rest. They agitate
The dictionary so we hurry to scribble down
The sibylline remarks it generates, fluttering
Wildly in the theoretic wind. I don’t know why
The jets sliced through the cable car, or why
A falling body is smashed to death against
Its mother’s lap below. To talk of gravity
Settles nothing at all. Why is gravity?
Do we live in a why-less concentration camp
We have grown at length to fancy natural?
And am I just wasting breath talking to the snake?

4 September 2000
Exultant
at or as
the half moon
mazy fair
above the drumlin

who called her up
to beam down
in such intense
blue autumn

sun a feathered
opposite a snake
of snow half melted
over the pines?

Ivy up there.
Wasn’t me wasn’t
anybody the name
I knew so must
have been you.

Be you.

5 September 2000
Hearing her sing
hearing her
hearing her rehear
rehearsing to sing
rehearing her sing
rehearing her
rehearsing
hearing her everything
hearing her
hearing her hearing
hearing until the famous
melody begins
we came for
into the world
the world of hearing
where the last Temple
is being built not of
singing but from pure hearing

so hearing her hearing we hear.

5 September 2000

(hearing Arabella’s *He is the right one for me…*)
Sometimes the mind too tired to be interesting
just glows to itself in a corner of the galaxy
like a misspelled word in somebody’s love letter
you can’t stop being bothered by
though it’s you the letter loves,
it’s you the text is marshaled towards, you.

Just like music. Like somebody lecturing on Bach
when you want to hear Bach. Like stained glass
when you want Jesus. Like anything at all
when something else is on your mind.
More people walk out of movie theaters than went in;
these are the pellicle people, children of shimmer,
who come alive between screen and eyeball
and walk off perpendicular and inherit outside
a part of the life you used to live
before you went into the dark. But there’s room
in life for everyone, crazy as they may be
or just alien, meaning from somewhere
only the light has ever gotten to and come back.

5 September 2000