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BRUMAIRE

Now my favorite month is here
plates shattering in dark kitchens and
those wooden skeletons unmasked again
to let the sky through

The stars are broken dishes, the moon
a pool of camel piddle, they've gone
with their learn'd ideas, they trust
grey roads to nowhere

and leave me king of here. Everything I see
in her light, colors fade in brightness,
cold rain wakes up prophecy,
I act in wood.

They hunt and I find. They bind and I
forget to run away. It is here,
isn't it, the clam and the oxygen,
the sad piano,

clear brittle voices of children, the night
lost their footsteps and the dog is dead,
rain rattle, clatter of scepters,
it is good to live

thoughtful in pale leaflessness
paper-naked, nothing to remember
under the intelligent sky, fallen
leaves full of faces.

Everyone I ever knew.

1 November 1994

In fine ellipses
the weather gathered
against the earth
this war

this air
& woke against
myself the sleep
dark ruin

what can a road
be sure of
not a leg or running
coins fall

hear them roll
where is the difference
I once thought
worth everything?

1 November 1994

That there is something waiting in the river
frightens me because I have never
been an instrument of dream I wonder
will anybody pull the curtain
and look in with that terrible white face

god or devil it doesn't matter it is anybody
who is seeing and another consciousness awake
when I must be the only one, I am velvet
and the dragoman of night. There,
that's what I meant. The borders

are not barriers. Every glimpse is a gateway
and the gorgeous flags of every other country
flicker in the dark. In my eyes is light enough
for all your seeing. See by dint of me.
Tell me, what is waiting. What is it

down there you think can see me as I am?

2 November 1994

Say yes to
every ordinary
thing,

buy

nothing.

This is enough
as a rule.

2 November 1994

At the end I suppose every
one does reach out for love.
Which takes away what
little we thought we knew
of it, that it was special,
was silver, was Isolde
hurrying to her dying lover.
Whereas it is everyone
reaching the end of love.
Which still feels like his fingers.

2 November 1994

INVARIANT ENERGIES DIVIDE MEEK SUMS

Sunrise in hypertext, a child desires
something he found in a book—

this is magic,

old bad high lovely Magia,
to want what we read in a catalogue,
old Grimoire or Eddie Bauer,
makes no difference, philately or
aerobic gear, no difference,
we want what we read. And it is reading.

Reading restores the immateriality of ideas.
Reading softens the distance between
palm tree isles and bussy boulevards.
Nothing is past the reach of magic

if not the grasp. An idea once propounded
loses its value —virtue,property—
in proportion to how many people hear it.
That is: ideas are matter, and like all the
matter-world, if you divide something
there is less of it. You give it and it's gone.

Increasing energy by reading a silent book.
Increase by reading. Share a cloak
with a beggar and be heaven, be merit.
Give: want without wanting. Read what is.
To read in the shadow of envy.
To have blessings like a tree.
To be pure again and cover pages
with the uncompressed exaltations of kindness towards things,
things, things.

I measure
the shadow coming through the branch,
I am November, nothing matters,
I can almost understand.

2 November 1994

It can't be neat, has to be flour or copper polish
or butter. It should be butter or suet. Spread,
they're waiting all through the sky, your name
for the universe. Pervade the Blue Door.

3 November 1994

This thing you're looking at is my face.
We share it.
Air always lives, lies, between us,
breathing in and out of us,
trying to make me you.

This poised mask of a thing I give you,
look at it, it is the ground
of our bare conversation. Once by the embankment
we watched the pale Tower
shimmer in river light by the Roman wall,

Roman light, Tower light, face light.
I am nothing but what you see.
In fact you give it to me.

3 November 1994

Beyond the broken city came the place of regard
the overgrown bower where believers
crow their liturgies against this simple hand
that almost wants to touch you silently

like Spain or a swallow. They come.
It is above us always, western river,
gravel garden, the calcium of my confusions
thick over any quiet cup.

Almost wants you. Almost, to be a bridge
between two meanings, cherries, your lives
for thousands of years unfolding
like naked wives in an idle seraglio,

all of these are you. A cushion. A glass.
A city I flew over one time, the Rhine,
trucks that pick up fat and offal from
thrifty butchershops. The rendering

of all things into a translucent confusion,
add ashes, live forever. Help me be clean.
The radiator is arguing like two merchants
at war in the marketplace in Thonon,

I heard them. One of them has killed his own horse.
The other is a secret donor to Catholic
causes. The listless customers of our day
refuse to take sides. I touch you. A lake.

3 November 1994, Hopson

AFTER HOURS

Someone whistling in the building.
Someone moving on the dark stairs.
In the forgotten showers someone's standing
dry, dry, whistling like the moon.

3 November 1994, Hopson

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Give him the mother tincture
since that is music

root animal seed animal
tuber in the glebe lights
when you look for it

look for me I am hidden in your clothes
this prong of me so many times divided

to taste the whole city rail by stone
and then the next day

and learn Portuguese and sift
the sand out with my fine teeth

desire! How could there be less than ocean?

Tilers fall from the sky, sinister churches
openly gape. "I take this drug
because the world is not yet ready for my power,"

it is a matter
of walking down the street
so no one finds you
and you find everything

that is heart huddle and a broken spoon.

Find a puddle in a gutter, sit in it
and make a sound that in another language
(which?) means I have come home.

4 November 1994

MONET

Monet found it resting in the shade
or more exactly as the shade beneath
the chair she sat on this side the roses.

This same dark light he found in Normandy
little village where the rain comes close
and solves stone houses. No one walks.

No one is waiting in the shade.
She sews her child's white clothes
all the time in the world.

5 November 1994, Boston

THE CRAFT

Is it discipline?
Or a secret inside?
They used to call a whip that

that almost made the body
into a mind, made the skin think
rivulets of blood

to satisfy the dark exchanges of the soul
or so I read in books, I who squeal
at the dentist's touch

like a door squeaking open.
Noises in the cellar
where no one is supposed to be.

6 November 1994
Boston

ANOTHER PART OF TOWN

1.

Land us where we fell — an incident
from another world, all right, the harriers
(who are they?) come down
and the kids in the neighborhood
dissolve into curious patterns of scatter—
Serengeti style. A herd is happening.

2.

Wait for the clapper at the door.
The leper remembers to come calling,
and tocks the dismal knocker at his belt
until you think the wall is coming.
And there he is, more alive than you
by virtue of his sickness, full of impact
mocking healthy insipid ordinary you.

3.

Too much entertainment
uproots the lilac at the doorsill. The bus
drops you in an unknown neighborhood.
At one corner you get a glimpse of open space
blocks and blocks away up the boulevard.
Here big hospitals are looming, pale
plastery vastnesses with helicopter pads on top.
Briefly you think about nurses, corridors,
machines that attach themselves to men.

Why have we come to this, you think.
Why has it come to this, a city inescapable,
buildings too big for the sky.

Where did you
think you were going way back then

(when was it?) you first began to go?
The bus was waiting and you went.

4.

In different colors (which are dialects of light)
the things arrange themselves. You have always known
that colors are the keys to the whole—
easel painting and the scientific age are
born at the same time, mean the same inquiring,
“this art is all about color.” Color
is analysis. Color is what things say.

There is enough light left to hear them.
You walk, an act of politeness to the landscape.
There have been so many busses in your life,
so many avenues. The bus stops are the only
measures. They meet you like years, like years.

5.

Where do you want to be tonight? That
is what the sky is always asking.
I have to brush low branches away to see.
Ginkgo, plane trees, shake them,
to see the sky that asks me,
nervous little trees of city avenues,
hospitals and bus stops and where
do I want to sleep tonight?

The sky's a page all ink and no white space,
all the words are written down at once,
and where can anybody sleep tonight?

7 NOVEMBER 1994

8 : 2 3

8:23 it said it never said before
my first first moment at this minute
I who measure everything and this

Not the conventional meter
or the tin stick at Arts et Métiers
I ask a liquid measure

all gills and parasangs and wings.

8 November 1994

LANDSCAPE

If big is scary, that's why hospitals are big.
Why do they have to make them fat as the Kremlin,
trampling the sky? They cliff over us,
terrifying torture houses. Against the skyline
the sneering silhouettes of hospitals.

8 November 1994

TWILIGHT

Clouds must be causing the same imperfections we admire
so in Persian carpets as they used to be called, back
when all those Cheever people went down to Watertown
to pick them out in airy warehouses, usually on their way
back home from the Cape — a family gets tired of bare
sea-washed wooden walls and floors a gleam with wax and sand,
Some color in the house for winter, russets and madders,
indigos like the creases in your lap when you've been working
too many hours on the stupid income tax. These Democrats.
Art is a prayed-for accident, long prepared by work and grace
and then it happens when you least attend. So they say,
those tired men in college lecture halls who seem to know all
about it but never do it, like priests authorities on weird sins.
So sunset makes all things strange, unreliable and beautiful.

8 November 1994

