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[*naufrages*, continued...]

He that made everything that's made
made it by book. And my old dam,
a vot'ress of that order, established sea
as a fit condition of the heart at first
restless, item, of unknown depth, item
of overwhelming lift and suck and drench,
when the wind comes over a good long fetch.
I dreamed of simplicity and French, of
Swiss pale wine in a large green goblet
seem'd formed of Ice, and then we walkt
at the north end of the mainland planning
not in vain the proper use of things — our workmen
were all around us waiting for our word,
itself both imperial and good business, what sense
these glamors make, to taste of flesh
and have an Idea also, random gallop, summer
over the reindeer plains.

And so have done with venerary
but Venus honor,
and build your temple unto Mars
mildly in morning shadow
where the big woodpecker
dips his big red head against the dying polity of trees.

Aye, there is too much religion in the world.

Now the sun glare flat as a spread of coins on a miser's board,
I have reason to suspect that man down there,
keep out signs and private aeroplane
on his own landing strip athwart the Neck.
And in that wild gale yester and the night before
he showed no small-craft-warnings on his staff
as if to say the Scukers! Let them sink! or They will sink
before they read my red!

Calm now. Scraps of music irritate my head
from all the amorous balladry I've made,
descant of island and a Song of War
all commingled in one recycling bin
green glass and colorless, called "Clear"

for Charlotte

Woke to ducks. Many quacking.
And now the Navy bombers hit No Mans Land
a dozen miles away across the Sound.
I have to get out of the sex business.

The ducks were loud, cute, just dawn,
I woke early but not that early, what
had disturbed the Ducks? And now the bombs
shake this island through the summer haze

cool sea breeze bears the news, mourning doves are cooing,
I have to get out of the sex business,
help me, alma Venus, deliver me to the other side,
how far is life on earth?

The business of cool hands on hot flanks,
ripe hurry and wet hair, the mesh of things
and standing naked in the dooryard welcoming
until the mind's the only metal moving.

And then the Ducks are crying at their trade.

24 June 1992

[*naufrages*, continued...]

[Bartholomew Gosnold is speaking:]

I was the Master of that ship. As God
from his breathed out benevolent (we hope)
Aleph spoke the whole world
into existence, and all the myriad
letters of the Permanent Alphabet
tumbled into place from his first breath,

so we were made, just so
this play comes from my opening cry
and all the action of it serves me.
Save my ship.

("The surmise itself [that WS had heard of this isle from BG,
both in the company of the Earl of Pembroke, ca. 1602-03, and
thus that WS had this isle in mind, His Desert, for the play, set
though it seems in the Mare Nostrum waters somewhere
between Naples and Algiers], the surmise itself sheds luster on
our island.")

or we run our selues a ground, bestirre, bestirre

[*Exit*]

So ends my part, Act I, Scene 1, line maybe 8.

And went back then from my Elizabeths
to that great sad Island where the QUEEN was dead
and Queen Jim sat prissy on the throne,

capable enough, a man of parts, but dour — a surly
wench of a king, much-suffering, scant-forgetting.

So I named the islands I had found
for the One we all had lost.

=====

If the island is the heart (or: at the heart)

of the sea, what is the heart of an island?

You said it, Charlotte: after some years
they turn inside
and contemplate the inward agony of things,
knowing themselves for all there is,
and hating what they find,

luster and tragedy of islands.

A house is the far shore. Caretake
of an island? A monument.

Penikese: 88ft at the highest, three cisterns.
In the wrecked cellars broken crockery,
chamberpots of lepers.

=====

The worst disease is memory,
the only cure is remembering. *dran.pa*

Be mindful of this gull the Self
eats everything is beautiful and kills.

Six gulls strut your lawn. A wreath. *'phreng.ba*
Walk quickly in the rain.

(Differing
voices in the crowd. A husband and wife should
sit home and read Shakespeare out loud together
by candlelight, being everyone together.

Persons
of the drama.)

Can you forgive me for all the enemies I've been?
Forgive my voices. Turn off
my hearing, this radio inside has said enough.

Car cough. Can the seaplane land in rain in fog can it go up?
Yellow backhoe snarls along the shore.
Stretto. These themes queen me.

Theta, a kind of sleep, wake me,
gorgeous, to your bay-green eyes.

The house on Canapitsit Channel looks like a fortress
guarding the narrows from the sea itself.
Contour dark. The rain, heavy now. King James the First.

24 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

Grian

for Charlotte

Sun finding her way through fog.
The first coin of her meek as bread
peeks and then is gone. The air's cool hands
caress my shoulders — is everything
the same as morning? A dog barks
like a child that learned a new trick,
full of the doing, meaning nothing.
The fog glows now, and she appears again
moon-small over the absent harbor.
Conventional bird sound, even the sea is still.
Blackbirds mostly, sparrows, chickadees,
the universal caravan of sky. All the trees
still ravaged by last fall's hurricane
have put out all the leaves they can, and still
mostly what you see in them is light.

25 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

for Charlotte

Thunder came when we were making love
and lightning lifted your breast against me
and all the waters came at once
the whole sky unlocked at last
after a couple of days of special pleading

even we had to learn the energy of islands
the way such inner things sneak out and stand
before us as weather or geology. Or the sea.
Our hearts out there. And where we thought *we* were
is quiet as that grove below the island's well
where you showed me your peace. Then at midnight
the outside came back in at last
so we could know ourselves again as us
not just the incidental savage beauty of the world.

25 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

[*naufrages*, continued...]

The incident
is light

my family's Bristol
from Somerset's leafy maybes,
a touch of west,
together than green
California that is Glastonbury,
crazed against the sunset
(below sea level
root of the Tor.

So what is this place this preposterous design
called Now or Newness or Here I Am
neither king nor commoner, un souhait
trembling under the far bombardment
Nomans Land in mist. Of course that's
the land Gosnold called a Vineyard,
Martha's

(while Mary — Vita Contemplativa —
was enraptured at the Master's knees
on Cuttyhunk),
that little
land of elder beech and heron
not the big island
which he called for obvious reasons
(look at Gayhead from the near sea)
Dover Cliffs. Whiteness of the whale.

The dead red jeep of Jimmy Nunes on this hill.

25 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

Apt as an afterthought
the seaplane lands
ducksquawking its wake
suddenly foams.

25 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

[*naufrages*, continued...]

OPUS LVMINIS

Being out of sorts with myself
I'm out of sorts with you —
this is the secret of being old.
Fatherhood. Magic. Influence.
Je me trouve déçu — the forest
comes to life all too easily,

the pale maskers learn their parts
too quick. And with riot, sackbuts and ale
the night dragoons
make a nasty little microcosm of
the Great Work of Darkness I pretend
when all your passions sprawl in love along
each beach. The opera passion

drives the music line, not general uproar.
In the interval, sound of the sea comes
windborne up from Barges Beach
near where the dead bonfire still had
warmth enough to ease my shoulders
that morning when — turned to the sea —
I first began to speculate a daughter.
Uncompounded save of me and thee,
white and red, a work of light
by the Wise in their sea-tower.

=====

In a play like this the world finds everything it needs.

"Wild roses white and mauve dapple the island, big ones born
from bright green small leaves that push up sometimes even
between the big sea pebbles on the shore. Betty's chinese

poppies bloomed today, last full day of our visit. There are no squirrels at all on the island, and their place is owned by Rabbits bold and tame. Deer are frequent, even at noontime will cross the strange Calvary of a road that reaches Lookout Hill between shoulder-high stone walls, a haunted road indeed. Whenever I walk up I feel someone behind me; today that someone was a fawn with big ears, regarding and regarding. From the top you see all horizons. South is truly the high seas, the wind is in that quarter now, coming in clean-scoured over what mariners call its longest *fetch*, its passage unobstructed over open sea. I remember in Hawaii a cliff I stood on where the strong wind was coming straight at me unimpeded for three thousand miles."

On a road like that
you go up, or down.
Economy of choice. A pink flower.

26 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

[*naufrages*, continued...]

Every island was a shipwreck once.
Every island is the same catastrophe.

It's always different the final morning.
Fog over the far channel, no wind today.
I watch the corner of the sea round which our boat will come.
Blackbirds sound like ducks. No wind.

Nashawena wintery and far. Quiet
except for sea shushing down the shingle, long
voluptuous low combers pour in today —
a storm in the Azores comes to memory here,
hush round my ankles you blue recollection.

I want to say every island is the same.

Three hundred ninety years ago Gosnold was still trying to get
some of his reluctant crew to stay here and settle; they built a
fort, and he prompted them to live like kings among the
berries, and feast on heron. They would not stay. It would
have been the first British settlement in America.

But as the romancers say, the Island
was not ready for us yet, the like of us,
pale Welsh things from under rocks and ruddy
West of Englanders with musty pants
after a broken voyage. The savages
lurked like deer on Penikese.

And all this while Ariadne slept.

Sometimes the work is just too hard to do.
A pressure on the Revising Orbs, a gaunt bleuâtre
beneath the Lamps of God, the Mind
is skittish in the face of so much said,

μεγα βιβλιον μεγα κακον

or how shall I revise my mind
by tansy and petunia and a Portuguese wind,
a friend dead in Paris and a vigorous E.R.1910-1992
old woman knitting Naushon wool
from all the black sheep
de la falaise
at your behest to make me a sweater,

from the cliff all afternoon we watched
gulls at their secret clifftop and modest Ducks
cork along the waves harmless among breakers on the shoals.

=====

Now walk slowly down the hill old man
and slower up again,
there is no market this early Saturday,

ten miles away bombs fall on Nomans Land
where Gosnold's men swallowed down
a surfeit of June blackberries,

low wind, high waves,
the sun is working through the mist,
walk slowly man in your mauve retiree pants
your summa cotton sweater your comfy Keds
God give you comfort of the weather and all ease
of wind behind to walk you up again

=====

The morning starts calm in mist.
Then as the air clears the breeze stands up.
Or it is the wind that cleans the air, no doubt,
though it feels otherwise, the mist lifts
and the breeze walks in. No inferences
except from what it feels. To feel the place
in place. To be an honest house.

27 June 1992 Cuttyhunk

SIGNS

for Charlotte

The French farmer picketing Euro-Disney and keeping its gates blocked in anger at American policies wears a John Deere green baseball cap. Or has the *Globe* gotten it wrong again, caption or picture or man or cause, is the whole world full of angry men in baseball caps waiting to get into the news? Is it too late to know what we wear on our heads? Is it too late to open the door?

A green hat with a yellow deer on it, American as the Vietnam War, as Fennimore Cooper, as Boss Tweed. Paul would have called it The Sign. I point out the blue sun visor I bought at Glacier Point to shield my eyes from the fierce Sierra brightness a year ago. It says YO SEMITE. We are not in the mountains, I am not exactly Jewish. You detest this cap, but climbed down and rescued it when a gale on Cuttyhunk blew it off my head and into a small chasm where deer were moving, nightfall. I smell freesias at the breakfast table, look up and see they're roses — a huge two-tone silky salmon and pink, two small reds, and a tall spike of blue campanulas, which books call Bluebells of Scotland. I smell the name freesias. Vriesia?

The sign. I would call it, the other sign, the mind, the opposite side of the sea. What is across the blue sea, mommy? England, she said, or Spain. I still smell the flowers, here, salt-transported, impossible, from the moon of distance suddenly here, fallen. The hands of a child smell of his whole world.

Select a line and follow it till it tastes like sugar.

The land of elsewhere and forever my mother called England, the other shore.

Blind men dream they can see the glistening tears
their eyes shed at what they've lost.
And we who hold the sight of things,

what else can we possess?
Where are the other
senses that we need?

The peace of God on a Boston Sunday
sun like Fresno falls on Betty's garden,
a jade tree full of juicy lies

pretends that it alone has borne the winter.

28 June 1992 Boston

A NEW SET OF SYMBOLS

Like the Sabian symbols in astrology, a set of likenesses or flags to claim our world. Map with these: your orgasms described. From their imagery or metaphors employed, a system of likenesses takes form. I thought of this one day when I had an orgasm like a harp ringing in a draughty attic, and another like the sand inside a clam shell you find on the beach.

28 June 1992

for Charlotte

At least to say this
the ferris wheel the story
in the Vietnam wall
a woman looking

back over her shoulder
at a name that can't
see the other man
that has to be me

two ferrets strayed or stolen
the mountain sunlight
diapason of the actual
beauty is conventional

love breaks the mold.

29 June 1992

AN EPISODE IN LOCAL HISTORY

for Charlotte

Or if they were walls
who would be looking
over of if the brush
full of hair remembers
nothing and the politics
of street cliches disarm
no enemy and a shadow
never covered the sun
a shell but no desert.
The hull of the *Copicut*
taken by barge to the Vineyard
to be remade afer twenty years
leaning on his house.
Some instrument
holds us together.

29 June 1992

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

The cameraman
filming a heron eating a pigeon
by an African waterhole

says the bigger bird is
"wetting its feathers to make it
easier to swallow whole"

do we believe it
drown it let
the river bear the crime of it

a croc trick
why doesnt the learned scientist
save the struggling pigeon

what is the heart of a cameraman
in a world of objects?
is all compassion just "interference"

and all interference evil save that
siny snout of the camera's
raping probe by some "objective" eye?

30 June 1992

for Charlotte

Waking up married is a lovely song
my hand between your thighs we both
were sleeping and we turned
to each other in the bed, summer
wakes us and a mower,
summer and birds of it, summer and needs,
greeds, the politics of finches
filibustering for seed. The heat
reminds us to be naked. And there you are
in the rosy shadow of the bed
more alive in stillness than they are
in all their mauve commotion, finches,
your quiet shoulders marrying my eyes,
your lips breath on the soft of my arm.

30 June 1992

FESTIVAL

The orchestra is finding its place in the sun
The horses wait for the moon

30 June 1992

SUMMER DAY

So much to do: grow leaves
melt snow, listen to Dvorak
combing the river with an amber comb
so her tangled hair finds its way home

30 June 1992

ITS

is not a word Shakespeare much uses
maybe ten times in all his work

that singular neuter possessive
as if a thing
could own a thing

or even a quality. Hardness
of the stone; the humid path.

From the depredations of housecats
out on the tiles
this next world war pieces itself together
hurt by hurt.

Now name that large
perfectly evident star over the new fence.

30 June 1992