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And the heavy rains come. An altar
of water
I build
on this black horizon.
To do these things.

To be capable
of wet. The growth
of things around me. Sleep.
The rock comes with its luster.
A world is a network of walls.

26 September 1992

I never learned to read: I cannot remember learning. But can I learn it now, to read the way I once knew how, so that the hours pass and the book's own *Lady Aventiure* comes, passes into the deep of me where *Michael Strogoff* and *A Vision* and *Treasure Island* live now, safe in the inscrutable silence behind the brain?

How can I *take* time?

And where can I take it,
to save it (save us)

from itself?

Save me from time?

Where do the hours live,
and the grey-haired young women
in their voluptuous beauty waiting,

hours, grey ones,
time tissue,
cloth of old.

Rain relents
for finches
come back to the feeder.

Shelter *in* time?
Learn to read at last
the natural script?

Two Jews in the mountains
walking slow,
both of them me.

26 September 1992

Once every year a night comes when water burns.

There is no moon that night
and your hands feel like blades of silver
hard to fold your fingers down against the palm
your body crackles like palm thatch when rats run

up to look at the moon, but there is no moon
no rats no trees the night holds all power in itself
refusing to release energy into the merest form.

Then water burns. You press your forehead
hard into your palms thinking your hands might be cool
they are cold they chill the hot blood in the forehead
so that pain stops for a few minutes

then you say *O that was pain* that word that just
stopped speaking and now in its silence you understand
there is not much left to understand.

It's all very well to talk about bread & milk & paper & silk
but the water is burning, the water inside each thing
is burning and your eyes see the other side of the night
where all the people you thought you'd never see again
are waiting, and all the words are talking again

loud beneath your eyebrows the color of fire.

26 September 1992
[finished 28.9.92]

ADAGIETTO

1.

Cat out there
suddenly alien animal

2.

interpose a fork a choice a lump of meat
from the we call it cauldron you
call it what you please
the name of the whole issue is Cosmology

3.

her lipstick fraught with orient

4.

unwrap the word before you get home
and speak

this is childhood

where the word
really means

grown-up people speak privately only
in the sweet murk of their own garage

5.

street talk is the least public of all
since it's always aimed at you
the customer

time's seasoned Individual
stoop
to salute

6.

she wore no light at all last night

she was busy breathing just for herself
aloft above the repellent gizmos of everyday religion

7.

I had a friend
and had another

Two became none
with a small remainder

just enough this
morning to wake as me

8.

by the bridge in Sarajevo
a name shot in the chest
says a whole sentence before dying

ventricle of the word
empty as a bridge in winter

it was not winter.

27 September 1992

THE DIAMOND QUARTET

Always looking for my inner point

a chant
in the reverberant quality
of wood (of weather)

left over from an irreligious Ocean
o mer di mi!

Where is the inmost blue of the diamond
gotten now?

The man is blind

he walks through woods

the woods see.

27 September 1992

On humid days of autumn the outer surface of hard candy
(orange flavor) is gratifyingly soft to the tongue prodding
against the Matter trapped by the front teeth, soft as a sestina
or a startling comparison in a Persian ode
turns out to be a mistranslation
committed under the distraction of watching a person
of indeterminate gender, almost attractive,
disappear shadowy against the striking white of Admiralty Arch.

27 September 1992
(for William Mullen)

IRRELIGIOUS TRANSPORTS

All I need to fall in love with a new culture
is to read a new book.

Albanian manners
suddenly fascinate.

And so forth. And in the long Tiranese nights
women stir, their violet eyes measuring
lamb-fat prayer lamps careful against a fail
of worship. And they yearn
for the sound of a tread on their red-druggeted
stairs. Mine. I have come to you again

out of the unreasonable ignorance of all things.

27 September 1992

NINE IS THE NUMBER OF EVERYTHING

Catching health
a squirrel at the feeder

leaps
at the sound of my door

and a white-bellied bird, is that it,
is that the gentleman-angel
come with a message from the inside of my head
I can only hear out there

in the Everything?

*Because each thing is only one of nine
we need each other and each thing
to understand the one of them we are.*

28 September 1992

Remarkable
in the fact of it
the hells made
out of a morning planet

and in the Dharma-ending time the bell
rings with a cracked sound because
the seven metals will not ring together, the bell

will not ring together,
the text inside your arteries
understands the gya-ling's blare
better than brain,

the spirit is not cognitive,
is not cognition,
it is a music in the moving,

and in this time the Sacred
Continuity is cut, is shorn
by those who sell it piecemeal, supermarket Tantra,
the spill of seed

the bell
does not hold,

the bowl between your knees
alone
holds the sweet moral milk

fresh even after the darkening of the night.

16 June 1992 [revised 28 September]

[MERIT]

Merit is beyond Habit

it rains

it rains like Gramercy Park

or myopia,

it runs like Myopia at Santa Anita,

it's something that runs fast and stays.

[notation found 28 September 1992]

FINDING THE BASE OF THE DAY

for Charlotte

1.

Or building it
in feeling.

Feeding
on imponderable happenstance,
the Emperor of Coincidence
writes down one more music.

It is malachite in the pavilions of Moi—
green lusters off utility,
a table
swept clear of crumbs
for the sake of sparrows
waiting always
in comparable need.

2.

Last night beneath the first gentle lurid probe of autumn colors
beneath a mackerel sky we heard in peacefulness
the Ode to Joy of summer's ultimate katydids
finishing their season over the ground.

for Charlotte

o my Charlotte
there is much to be said
for saying your name
saying your name again and again

Charlotte o Charlotte

for one thing
it's easy to translate
into any language

that has sounds in it
and beautiful women
and people who care
to call out in love

the name of the one
beyond all others
they love

o Charlotte

I learned this
from listening to birds
saying the one word
over and over.

30 September 1992
from Robert (mari)

The sky is so big today
vastness of it
sculpted by cloud to show
the immensity of space
focused around us
I look up and can't look
steady at it, it is too big
too beautiful, too simple,
too rich with infolded
destinies of light in shade
and shadow lost in emptiness,

I look away from it, I look away
from things, the fierce
embarrassment of being only me
and it being all of that,

to say it, the vastness
is so beautiful, what is it,
why am I so daunted,

the silence of space
broken by the noise of looking?

30 September 1992