Changing Woman

Lindy Hough

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Within the lovely limits of summer it is beautiful to live almost anywhere: most beautiful where the ocean meets the land; and here particularly, where all the varying splendor of the sea encompasses the place, and the ceaseless changing of the tides brings continual refreshment into the life of every day.

-p. 91, *Among The Isles of Shoals*, by Celia Thaxter

White-robed kindred turn the air.

As small as

together in the bed,

turning justice into their bodies
making peace flow
as sweetness affords it.

Birdsong in morning,
red sky at evening,
delights of the sailors,

but handle the stone.

- from "Working In the Lower Red Field"
by Gerrit Lansing

CHANGING WOMAN

Some of these poems have appeared previously in *Io*, *Tansy*, and *Truck*.

THIS FIRST BOOK, FOR POLLY

THE EXTERNAL WORLD

Eclipses, kings,
far away
things. Swimming
upstream, spermatozoon
in a passage.
The necessity to get free
from every particle
good & evil
I've learned,
say: loose
these marigolds, let these purple petunias
fling their own
dead buds
overwhelms, & --
we are back again at the gate,
clawing with curved nails
to get back in, to be allowed
to pull the red wagon
with its spinning white wheels
around again.

i used to be totally
watching. The
buzzing of hornets was
muzak in the background of
my head, lookingaround
at others, looking around.
Ready to fly out from
the wall when the clippers
got to close. Other bees
driven right off, silent
silver slice of nighttime
mine.
a number of girls to
deal with, a number of men.
all of me,
the men and the girls and the assorted
odd people, learned
just at the start,
another bee's busyness was all
you might learn from
& yet nothing you could work.

A HIGH PLACE

"Nothing is done until we
are turned on; until then
we just lay around."
-Richard Grossinger,
from The Continents,
"The Game".

the mountain stubble finds a home
in my heart only when i'm
above timberline. Tamburlaine. Timber
line. where nothing grows
except the far reaches of a scanty
moss, living off the quick
inhalations of a high earth.
Birds who visit only in-
frequently, preparing even then
for the journey downward, for
an integration of battle, of
high court, of honor & justice.
Only the best survive. Only the most
honest love their mothers enough
to leave.

Somewhere there is a clean clear
di/vision line, here grow these
who need this amount of air, here
these find less suitable.
Other needs. What is a poetry?
what is learning from a prose?
He is excited by the peacefulness
of chanting with his friends.
It is a good prose. He separates
himself from what he is not
& never was. Synthesized, it is a
mystery story.
Lines read over, & who; poems, a
beautiful woman distracts, inside
inside, balancing bushels across her
shoulders, a pole between them.
Fruit without fruitflies.

In different zones. She
learns from prose & becomes it
& yet moves into rapids where

all signs are effective now. Natural
as swallowing eiderdown,
sparrow,, fluttering things hard to get
down.

A SIMPLE APPROPRIATION

into the day the day was away before
& she had on returning found it home,
picked it up holding its entire compact
body loosely against her chest
covered it with her blouse shielding it
from rain as she went out &
taken it home

the day spanned
nothing any longer it was

not existing for others
who had wanted to use it, lying on beaches
working in gardens they were back in
night now & would just have to
go to bed only that to use till she

took it back, got it outside again
& placed it back in the field & let
it romp with the rest of the

days

THE OLDER ONES

all, in the end,
you must destroy.

& this has been
the hardest: the columns of
women & hip men in my head
proclaim, we're all a
like. all our kitch
ens look the

same. Dante comes forward,
heavy in a red velvet
robe, and is unintelligible
on the League of Nations.
Aquinas says, what
wd I do with a
stain
less ste
el sink. & still

the most learned from,
& still the most to be
disregarded.

---

energy coined up from the
existing matter in the gutter.
how the figure is
solely isolate.
strives out
to render fingers touching.
it is a place made
of non-sensible things, of
the fabric which holds
against all winds, the moths
in the web, the rim on
the saucer, the pitcher
on the table

but not cup or spider. or milk.
Between. Insolent layers.

institutions have
weaved so easily. men glimmer aboard,
can wrap themselves so adroitly
around spaces where they
find a notch, stick out
only so far with recognized anomalies,
lightings of recognized pain
& disturbances & renderings.

& another is always
reaching for the object & the movement, &
all he has to give, all
he is given to give
is the fiber inbetween,
hardly even yet woven,
& he who grasps is sometimes happy

but others walk away saying
what is there to
be held, what is there at
all he holds,
there

WE.LIVE.IN.THIS.HOUSE.

She is chipper, she is not an expatriate, she does not have to start each time anew, she is in the United States, it is a symbol, there are foghorns sounding outside along the coast about half a mile away; through the woods live a particular man & his particular wife who are as particular beings on this planet.

There are islands in the night she has not explored. There is a notion of God which influences the geese veeing outward, her watching them, watching the middle-sized Northeastern Airliner swell off the ground. A pregnant wife of a soldier who is on it is sobbing with parents at the wall is sobbing, all the family dabs their eyes & look helpless, it is either the boy's or the girl's parents are with her.

No way to tell. On the backside of the island geese land at a pond in their flight southward. Fall, & a tight experience, it is

all together yet the actual entities mark themselves out, demarcated with a white chalk line, we are moved from one to another our experience ending & beginning at the same instant.

Failing to keep the tension up, she goes to sleep. Failing to keep one's own yearning yarn from becoming clothes, yearning only, a moving picture falling under the feet blowing against trash cans of what other people have written, what they are doing, the plastic milk carton bends over and falls in the flame, bent by melting.

She goes over to the fire to stoke it, prop up the log about to fall. The firelight falls on the furniture, the heat is felt, we say it

casts a warm glow. But it is a feeling of made-up union we have grown accustomed to, we are used to it and see it as pleasure. There is nothing intrinsically pleasurable about this,

any of it.

A GARDEN OF LOVE

A line can only be aware of
another line at a point of contact;
...and a soul of another soul where
their ideas are in conjunction.

Crowley, Moonchild

I

the stone wall
articulate
in its sights.

Through you to
Everything,
& yet knowing
everything
I can more
know you.

we try from
the inside, the livingroom

rug trotting
the wall, &
die for outside;
snow, cities
away.

II

He is trying to get
there
from the outside.

Bringing in berries,
a green pepper,
a tomato not yet
ripe.

They die be
cause they
are so close

they are not
together

Glimmer of the
wall sets
stilettoes
brimming
in her head.

II

the poet raises
ambiguities
ambivalences
& anomalies
in his garden.

He plants a rotating
crop, marigolds &
nasturtiums between
the rows.

He loses hope, ignores,
goes hopelessly back.
He works the ground if it
is only for the negative information
it gives him

He knows what to do
but his information exceeds
his spirit;
his heart is an ash can.

He seeks the way
to use ashes
& climb above symbol
in his garden.

III

the atavistic water
dances his feet.

he is binary,
they move through it,
he is in flux
sandpipers, clouds,
spray on his shirt,
rumble of his bowels,

movement drowned out in
sound.

Sound of the
Collegium greeting him.
A silent transition,
it is birth &
the Way is
the movement the stone
seeks, through flux.

The Way past transition
is
more movement.
He comes across
from the bank
where earlier
he had been rooted.

TAKING FALL LEAF/LEAVES

1

be you separate
from all other creatures.
be you a bloom

encased in a bulb,
seeming similar
but all
is difference

all is what happens
to you over
winter,
what streaks
flash through your soil

all is the
slant
of the sun
day following
different day

all is how you
work with
the tops of
different jars,
straining to get

some satisfaction
out of this one
on that one

be you fine. be you giver, finder,
keeper, loser, further than
anyone, more special to anyone
to yourself than anyone.

2

temptation

& did i say
to this young man
come looking after
his past or
his sleeve,
this way was
Barbara Steele killed,
this way was
a cup of coffee in the
sunlight,

this way was a fjord
& this a mountainland
where beaches were fifty feet
up, no

he just looked up the
sandy name of a
neighbor & said we
were cultured &
he was from Denver, &

i let him go with
your name who he might
have known unsaid,
a mountain streaking into
the ocean going on
into the night nobody
seeing it
or hearing it
murmur disconsolates

CROSSING THE PLAINS

L left the road
at 90 miles an hr

whistling a tune of
common knowledge,

hugging close a phrase
of uncommon peristaltic contractions,

going underneath,
coming up with

seaweed sassafras
milkpods clinging

to her hair to her
spindly wrists.

Clinging as nothing else had
singing as no one else had against

To Be Sure, Certain & Smug
written on

all the college blackboards
& countryside billboards

in the great media
stomp-out of the country

's last failing attempt
to control mind/life/consciousness

THE WHITENESS OF THE UNDESCRIBED OBJECT

Trying to make every flower new every tree its own rejecting constantly each spore that didn't come like Venus tearing out of the world-ocean-mind in rhythmic cyclic wave-contraction was tiring, was an old roadster with a running board parked in front of a 1948 Lawrence Kansas barn, on which I could rest a leg while riding my bike home from school; was a mackrel tiredly cooked in whole wheat flour with wheat germ dried parsley trying to make it good, trying against all odds of entropy, a scattered universe, The People fishing for catfish off the banks of the Huron River, was tiring, but was indis-

putably better than white space, a fullness of filling up the page/world/day/oven/blackboard/your arms around me, on me, touching me every inch of my body with white palms. As Reich says, touching from outside to make up for a lack of bursting from the inside, my body a filled balloon stretched taut & looking for tension charge discharge relaxation, or, like, total *out*.

These things fill the soul, come from out to make in able to out. Fill it so white space can't exist, the blanks on getting up from a nap too quickly, having to sit in the livingroom & stare into the cowpasture, to the far trees to get any bearing at all on directionality; the blank white space with white dots going off & pummelting into different directions looking at a white wall or an off-green one, such blank space.

Which is why first conceptions of outer space are terrifying, the relief comes in learning it is black spongey depth-filled space with planets and stars. Darkness is her pillow once again. Darkness dreams well because space is either filled already or will be.

THE YELLOW WALL

Keep probability
in its place.
As explanation of conditions,
I mean. If this flower
were to flower more beautifully,
better soil, more manure
A more perfect yellow wall?
A better sun?
A more lovely filter than this sky?
Some things you can alter:
outside you. I can make the flower's lot
good, see what there is to do.
But my own! There will never be a
time more propitious than now,
though sun parches inside our mouths
cat's chicken bone's stuck,
arching across roof of her mouth;
Fleas bite & hopaway until
each black spot on the floor becomes one.
Yet still couldn't we build a
shield around the sun from Jupiter's surface,
hammer it out, live there
reflected in that contained heat.

MORAL HISTORY

The notion is foul.
The notion is not safe.

Fail-safe.
Foul safe.
fair play.
Safe play.
Safety.
Play safe.
Fail play.
Fail through play.
Play through failing.
Playing at riding a bomb.

Failure, a more adult
word. Connoting degree,
general condition, act not
so demarcated as Fail.
He fails, but is moving
towards (inexorably, like
a giant snowball) Failure.

Pass. Northwest Passage.
Loveland Pass. Berthoud
Pass. Northwest Failure.
Power Failure.
Powerful failure of fail-
safe devices to obviate death.

THE MANIPULATORS

She tells me proudly that
her husband can realize he's dreaming,
turn the dream to whatever ending he wants,
turn the plot around.

A dream-structuralist.
A technician.
A dream-repairman, turning the knobs,
souping up the story.

The beast on the plain
questions the boast
from unconscious to conscious,
watches confusion wander between
dream & art & technology.

Paint the town (dream, sperm, building,
canvas) red!

All the good guys come home tonight
to don dinner & their wives help them
put it on. It is a weighty sable fur
made of collusion.

WE GROW

SUSPICIOUS of every word,
as of every breeze. How mean,

I was thinking, of my thought
about him, & instead of mean

meant small, cruel, a strong
emotion after throwing a negative at him.

Because I had thought: the disease
is bigger than him. Finally takes him

over also; something at last is larger
than him: his body, the disease in it.

He had only the flu. But it was a mean
(cruel imprecise sarcastic irritable jealous)
thought, as if to say with delight
finally you're down. Your brillant mind
can't work against the physicality of the flu.

He answered this.
There are truths.
I'm one of a lot of people, small
& yet moving, coming to these truths through my own
means -- narrative, stories, poetics, a poetic.

Others come to them through other means. He held
up the yoga book he was reading, a man lunged on the
cover stretched out over his feet. Biology. Yoga.
Astrology. I read about others' means, & try to take
in some of them, but it is never a case of the large-
ness of me & whether I win or lose. There are universes
& I just keep going.

He had himself correctly lined up.
A star in the nightlight sky full of myriads of stars
in galaxies in universes. Not the only largest or par-
ticularly large; correctly spaced out about size.

A PHENOMENON

: when i cared about you
i was concerned: whether you got off
librium, what you wd do when George got back,
how you will learn to stop crying.

But its floated away now: stars have wheeled
& new boats have moved in &
that distracting track across the fields
has rammed into me again; it was a pipe dream
to think of getting there fast as an
airplane, crossing land through a cloud
of illusion.

That's why every day has
a different garden in it: not only
different vegetables to plant, but all
around my land the terrain keeps changing
as I look at it closely, the spots change
soon as I have worked over them, let drop
some incredible energy and involvement as
I plant them, different ships to be dealt with.
But they all dump into one pipeline,
& baby, *thats* what sustains,
not my altruism
for you & your crib, velvetpants, eyeglasses,
spiderdance.

The great age of be-bop
is over baby,
& lots of people I care about
are dead there's no Harper's Ferry
on truth its where you find it
& doesn't last till the next day

I thought I cared 'bout you
I thought I understood about truth
I thought I had heard an angel
calling in muted voice up from the gutter
rasping, Five-Penny Candies
but it was only an old shoe sighing
& singing for the lost souls that've
danced down this street before me
saying

Frigid Fine Fucking
Bastardization of Fine Female

Friends gone & lost to politics
drugs war liberation middleclass

sad american values & enclosures

STARRY SKY

The artist
wanes & sparkles,
nether atmosphere of layers
of currents in the day
interposing;
coming into cloud
he is out again by
a fast wind,
moving along in potentialities.
On the blackboard
it was drawn as two
separate regions, separated by a
chalk wall, or glassed aquariums on
either side of our eyes through which
we peered & gestured arrows in great curves
from one to other:
actuality,
& possibility.

But nothing is as simple as
this right & left,
is instead like Venus:
worst times are when
his fullness, to his mind's eye
is complete
yet so far away, so blinded by a
white Sun in a sky
where no one even himself
is looking, where he
can barely hear the Voice
addressed to him,
or from Him;
Time & HolySound
falling through space
like silent tufts of cotton,
out

aimlessly drift-
ing

worst are
moments when it is not
clear
which doings should occupy his
attention out of such a clear night,
when
Necessity & Worthwhile & Desirable where
reside
in such a plenitude of sky
he cannot hope to guess where,
like so many tiny dots of stars
bobbing in a
tub of dark water

AN APPRAISAL

Breakthroughs
are everywhere.
We stumble across the fields
to contain them, to gather
them up, turn the compost
to see if the seeped-in water

has helped. Conditions are
justified. "Anthropology,"
the boy wrote from the Florida beach,
where he was sunning himself in
cut-offs on vacation from Vassar,
"is fatalistic. C'est vrai?"
& he was never given an answer
because he knew, there is

no sensibility because we are
immersed in it; Christ is nailed
to the cross as easily as the
birds are back stymied at the
depth of remaining snow; you are
down in bed with an unusual

variety of flu that is winter's
last salutation or curse or salute
but it spins your head & you revolve through
the house following the sun as it moves
through kitchen to diningroom to livingroom,
but those names are all outmoded.

Where we eat, where we sit to read,
where we talk to friends, which is
everywhere. Cookie after cookie.
Reich: "There is no real experiencing
until one analyses the mode of
expression itself."

Sublimations are spontaneous. Everything
we do: (the *wall* is real) is so rough
because its unpracticed, not that we've never sailed
before, but that the waters haven't *been*
before. Formerly,
soup. The rich bionic churning we came from.

The waters we sail on (moving out to place
the pots) the waters we came from; the land
we work the land worked us. A pipefish
stands on its nose to become one more
blade of moving grass. Only inseparable
from our environs are we organism

rather than object.

IRRESPONSIBILITY & ITS BLANKET, NON-ATTACHMENT

Some days I work in the garden all day
& some days I say fuck it.

& I'm still happy,
God's in his heaven, if
the grass is greener
on the otherside I'll never see it
or will be of another consciousness
if I do.

God the *horloger*.
Our careful keeping of God's time
by our chronometers.

Does he care enough

do we of his
to keep our time
to reckon it

Does God even know
or care
that we are human.

We are petulant
in our human-ness. The baby
cries across the street,
unsure of All & Everything
except that Sun's uncomfortable on
his head, or belly, or burp/gas/air
the air you breathe you exhale, people,
makes me cry.

Two ways (like looking at God's watch)
to kindle a look at the apple tree.
He's an old man in distress. Gnarled &
sick, dropping premature apples which
could be rosy round red America. Help it.

Or, that's the way it would go, untouched.
Let it be taken over by the bands of wilds.
By the Wild family, nourished on goat teats
angelic hands & ears & eyes
will help it cross the Androscoggin.

Apples, I love you green & small
or wormy
or not at all
or red.

TWO BANDS FOR ROBBY IN JUNE

in some ways, haven't you heard
everything before?

That really is the question, isn't it,
how long are we going to be alive,
& what shall we do until we die?

I put you to sleep & still I sleep deep,
while you pull apart a book that asks

for it, is clearly mechanical object
rather than flat, something must be
done to that contrivance, you think,
and destroy the book in the process.

But new is nothing. It still says
CAR & still says TRUCK, and all signs
point to it still being a birthday present
for you, just what you are talking about.
& so we give it in a slightly irrelevant
form, because we move quickly and don't
take much time at what we do.

all we live for is perhaps pulling things
apart to see how they are made
& trying to approximate anothers desires.

* *

I thought I would draw you a truck
& a train
& a car thrown in
because truck and train are hard to say apart.
& show you them, but you grabbed the pencil
away and didn't want to be shown anything,
wanted to make your own drawing,
or not. / How the stars do fall.
How the night air shifts the rain.
Pulling up cod, hand over hand,
Wendell in easy natural rhythm,
balanced heavy between his two feet having
done this since he was 11 or 12, thirty or
forty years of it, its that way, you can't break
natural rhythm. To only sense the natural
rhythm, know the pulled stop that means
fish biting & not caught on a boulder, to go with that
tug always, confidently

I watched Wendell's form & tried to mimick
it, right hand doing just this, left hand this high
began to feel sometimes I'd caught something,
but had to let him take the line for the real
proving tug, pronounce it fish, he'd maybe say,
" I think you've got something there" & give it
back to me for the tugging, the excited pulling
of it heavily up, hoping the line would be loaded,

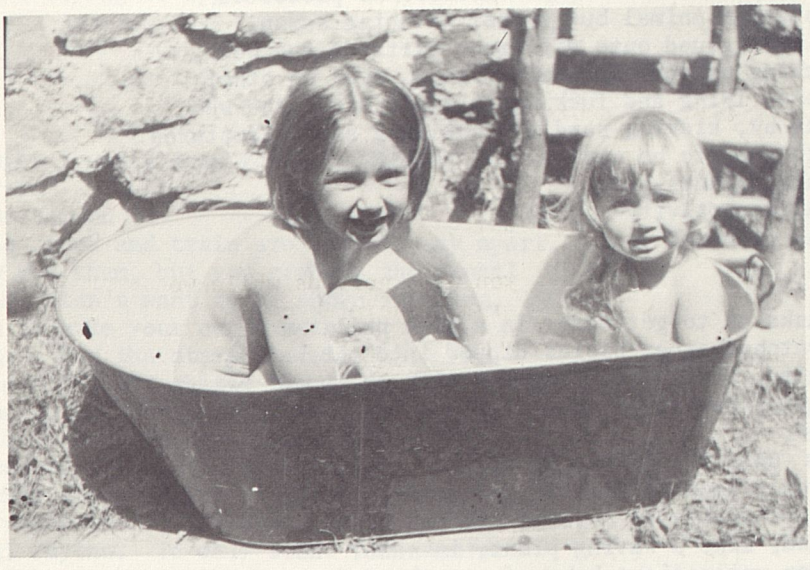
heavy physical strain of
pulling. White arcs through the ethereal water
at the side of the boat, first one fish, huge,
then another / another.
Hook off, & plop
into the boat.

BEACH BABY

8 ft. away water coming in
chaos of splashes screams
the child not finding his essential identity w.
okeanos, nor is this fertile
friendly inland crescent thalassa he protected
crustacean animal but rather watching human,
all eyes glued onto different parts of the body,
watching as our human dimensional eyes do other
humans, lying and fucking in their minds she who
walks by, kicking sand and building sand structures
as to, how to be open to all people?
events, places, is
total receptivity
total openess?

He asks us to get water in a blue pail.
He watches other babies dipped into the water,
dangled, their feet tingling with the open
spraying waves, he does not identify.
We do.
He's only 2. Taking it all in
he would seem to swim in the detail of it,
thus be unable to move of his own accord,
rooted, like a waving plant, in sand. No
longer unconscious baby of one who does everything
to please, explores water as freely as everything,
he is wary. The waves are something large.

1000 hydra eyes all open alive
to resounding echoes of pleasure/pain
lack of comfort which come swimming
into these hoary shores



THE DINNER

an older couple comes to dinner, they
are beautiful at the door, a cake with them,
wine strides in the door & presents itself
at the kitchen, but they
tarnish.
They argue incessantly
with one another, when forced
to confront each other directly
its a smashed wall, finally
a coda: a mounting pitched laughter
mocking the other whether he
or she
lies with strangers; she allies
the child against him & they whistle
together while he tells a lobster story,

the sarcasm piles higher & higher
until my ears are stuffed with
stale barbs, the malice in each's eyes
crowding like a third eye

doing dishes:

you were nervous while we
argued, wern't you

damn straight

& demeaning, she to him who has enthusiastically
laid his story in a long roll across the floor:

pick up your scribblings Lynnie,
its time to
go

SELF-CONSCIOUS

It is not a Way
of Being

You are in every mind's eye
wrapped in velvet, rapt
to your attentions in your own

You dread that the typewriter's y
will get stuck it will be a voice screaming
at you revealing the most fatal of flaws
Found out to be an imposter everything
will be over end there

You cross the huge oceanic
rug once more

The sleeping cat jerks
his head up when you come through
the door you are an intruder
in your bedroom

The poem lies sallow on the floor
you let the child trample it
without stooping to pick it up.

& all romanticism
                & self-pity
are yours.

STORM OFF ISLES OF SHOALS

Solid & stolid & sea
spent, the brunt of
the storm never knows
where it will
let up, had enough,
at whose door did
it linger & pass on,
mad wolf into the
night, gone hunting
over onto someone
else's shoals,
someone else's
ocean dream tide
                & continent

So we argue; & next morning
find bright sun tossing snow
the storm (eye of it)
blown out to sea

INDOORS

I am so up-tight,
strung-out,
his scattering of
the jar lids all across
the kitchen floor while
I dodge them to make dinner

lurches me into
a vestibule of
knotty tears;

push, like
the hot air making
its way up the stairs
from the pot-
bellied stove,

myself, up to
cooler regions, where he
sleeps in calm & I
restock, glasses on
the cold window glass
frosted
so we can't see out.

*

frenzy of snow
I can only glimpse
out a corner patch

blowing up & out
& all about, we
moor ourselves

more closely to book,
needle, typewriter, as
snow density dares us
to drop anchor in
the cathedral of
Inside Us

OCEAN PERCH

(out of water

eyes burn
scales ache
shadow-territory melted
to pain, to end
of all known world to blinding
flash of a
glint of silver
here i ascend to the
long-ago remembered:
Once I was fish
& it was
Water
all i knew needed
& loved

(in water

All
is potential. I
glide & swerve
know best every
negative capability.
Only my shape, everything the sides
of my head see
is form.
Kelping sinuosities
define my thinking.
No one knows
more the
sweetness of movement
the horror of totally
still.

A CAREFUL BOUNTIFULNESS

Love,
I adore relaxing into the
containment of form we hold
in bed, violence & the softness
of the curled embrace my back gives
to your front, that we fit
so well

this breaking open is a starry
book, a starry world, a starry
sensation, filled with so many
breakable entities
splatter against the window
around the corner by sitting still
you can break open the stars the
snow catch the dew for more moisture
trap every available entity

resisting all temptations to
summation: not, "this is the grand
excitement of life" because that's
the opposite direction, the route
of general vapid blindness,
only in
seeing you exactly seeing the garden
rows exactly as clearly as the clear
air lets me smell the difference
between catshit smell inside & clear
outside, each sense assulted because
all are used in this incredible process
of breaking down, of nut-cracking

WE GO TO ROME AGAIN

A week of distrustful servants,
slipping & sliding all over the
mind's eye. They were slipshod,
hardly held together, their shoes
constantly coming off, having to
run to me to pound them
back on again, such an ordinary
smith.

these servants were informing
on the days of the week. Trying to
get them to accept bribes; graftology,
the simple science of screwing
someone not your own. The days,
thus informed, were all the more
in the know, holding, as they
did, the actual key to our progress.
We could not go forward without
moving through Tuesday, &

after that Wednesday, onward
to the Arno. That is,
if we ever reached it.

The masters of our fate
held the bridles in their slippery
fingers, and we were afraid the
whole month would head down the drain.

We were collective.
Or saw ourselves so.
Spawned off from the eldest of us,
we were always children, or became so
on this continent.

The guide
(his name is hard to pronounce & is
easily forgotten) called our attention
to the movement of earwigs
balanced on the corn stalks.
He would have us notice the
rustle the mold made,
snuggling up to the stoned limas,
drowned in passive soggy soil.
We accepted his explanation that water
was the cause of the limas' damping-off
(an otherwise form of death)
& we accepted his explanation that
earwigs were divorced from ears
because he was one of two screwable
men in town & we had been keeping
a sharp (an eagle eyeing a
mouse, or a mouse eyeing a dragonfly,
or a dragonfly eyeing a gnat)
I
on him.

But he kept at a level of
formality that was intolerable,
& finally we blended into the
group of us, &
settled back to watch
the sights. At home perhaps
it would be different.

But it never is:
what's There is
here;
we are surprised to learn
that all the other countries

have SSTs & dope & exploitation,
that ours is not the most deluded family
on the block.

We saw ourselves sick
of the sights &
sick of opportunism
& sick of rain
in Rome.

THE FLOWER'S SPACE

Gloxina Blue Chip, its hard
to invent a story that wd be right
for you. A situation in which
you wouldn't be the fail-safe

integer, the plot without which all
blank spaces fail. As though you
needed a situation, a garden plot
all your own, required a new day

each day, beaten down easily early
in the morning if all fails to
reveal itself new. Some buildings
have to be left standing: the patient

inventor can't approach a totally
different cosmology each morning.
The barn still stands: sled on
patch of brown ground surrounded

by snow, hockey stick against
garage. But the light is changing
all the time, moving across the
snow fields sun ages but little

in its eaons of agelessness. Old
age ceased to care. So firm, in-
firmity is not a concern. Simply
unconcerned with unknown white space,

or dark star-dotted black. Columbus
in jail, beyond the new seas. Will
West after the pages end, making his
way on the other side of the Mississippi.

You understand, don't you Gloxina:
I want to give you a tiny pot so you won't
know this loneliness that comes not
from not having *others* but from

having *The Other* constantly on one's
back (a wicked book, a wicked man,
as it were), constant unbroken

looking of the tiger in the face,
of the whiteness of the uncharted
sea & sky. Never a let-up
in the azure rain.

CONFUSIONS OF PLACE

I'll not admit when I lay sleepily the
cadres of cheerleaders turning cartwheels of
drowsiness in formation on my eyelids, thinking
of wide flagstone terraces in back & brick porches
in front with yellow stone bears & white benches
a winding curved shiny wide mahogony bannister
riding around a curved staircase, 19 stairs,
sliding down scratching it with a belt buckle;
a soft sunken turquoise pool with goldfish in it
some summers, the paint flecking off, the drain
stopped with a red plastic cup which caught its own
leaves under the junipers; a grape arbor with a
fountain that never worked but grapes and vines
on which the cat lay, suspended over a play-
house, splattered in the sun patterns which fell
on the floor

that I'm thinking of my child house, shell of
the spaces of early years, shell of all con-
sequent spaces. The quiet tyranny of those details
orders my mind's caravans on trips forward & back.
The house slices time and has lovers, of which
I am the best, the most faithful. Certainly the
only adoring. I people it with bruited occupants.

A lovely regal lady has possession of the house.
She glides in velvet, purrs with a velvet tongue
to its windows, her hem, sash, slippers polish
the stairs as she flies down them. Up and over
the staircase endlessly she finally throws herself
out by night into the courtyard between the two towers
of the house, becomes a bat: we see her on a hot
night by an erratic swoop of incredible speed a

bird is incapable of. She claps her hands sharply. The house blurs & wobbles, rings itself with green smoke. Our four cats come out on the high flat tar roof & peer over the edge, running in worried little steps between the past & the present.

The house slipped from my parents' hands as they slipped from each other, the years simply pulling apart as easily as an oreo cookie, until now they live separately one in an old apartment and one in a new, & for all I know the rent is due. Streaming down out of a century of living they come to rest beside swimming pools with community game rooms & whimpering rules on pets & children & women.

Can that regal bat lady fulfill that house's power? What can one be to make a house happy? Surely the Linden tree in back sighs each fall, Where is she who was named after me? Surely the pool remembers and says Where? She patched my cracks every spring. She worked to get me sparkling.

The house sighs for all the power it had, & doesn't know of its power over me. There are branches off this root:

no one can find out what happened to Minou Drouet, blind French child poet who was part of a pocket of time during my childhood, except me. Only I can track down her piano-playing Loire forests, even remember the families of birds who nested in her sleepy hair. Is she married to a professor in Paris? Does she live a civilized happy life of maids & children & appointments? Is she *very* unhappy at losing the piano-playing forests?

AFTERNOON

a voice sings The Song from the tv
downstairs & we are poised for the play-off.
Something is about to happen.

He flies from where he had come, isn't it always
like that. Rootings are where we return to,
what we try to hack up & fail at, are too ten-
acious we give up & turn truth into magic.
& they do care, watching him watch the game,
I decide it is pure concern. There is no
trickery or fakery here. For a rough sport,
it is a clean game. There are very few questions
of human motivation to consider.

Later, friends come, eat, drink, we have a party.
Afterwards feel unspeakable let-down, we clean up
with dissembled sadness: there was no real
communion, un-invited guests came & hogged the
persimmons & pomegranates, talked to no one else
but themselves. We want to feel free but only
feel indignant, we were rice grains only shaken
in a colander, softly passing.
& o no one touched anyone else, and no one met
any one's thoughts. Those I had imagined myself
speaking quiet meaningful spirals to were across
the room spouting loud trivia, as I was also
to whomever I spoke.

EMU RITUAL DANCE

We sing about their dance
from the sunniness of our day
as they sing about the emu.
He is a large feathered bird
big of bowl body, long sinuous neck,
tiny head with eyes-that-see-so-far.
Majestic, he is focus of
the dance.

The process is many-fold: the bird is
made sacred. The work of the dance
is sanctified anew. The badlands (the
Place Itself, or our place in the sun,
& what that might mean)--in this case
one tree, scrub, dry caked earth of
lizards -- is made sacred.

A spot of ground is made wet to a rich
burnt sienna, then dried & smoothed.
As it dries the colors are mixed:
ash is scraped for black,
blood is spurted for red.
Where does the white come from?
It's in a trough; a board hollowed
(hallowed) out; the painter dips
his stick in & presses white dots
in patterns around the bent arrow tracks
of the bird. Dust motes? Snow?
Fine spirits?

The men know each other well.
Their connections to one another
are strengthened by this dance.
They rub the black ash-paint on one
another's body. Painted, some cheer
& criticize, some act the story out.
All know how it should be done. There
are past performances to compare with
this man's stance, the way he shakes
his body.

The hunters have gigantic head-
pieces. They feel that weight, not the
weight of all universe & responsibility,
but the seriousness of the catch & the dance.
It is not awesome, although their bodies
are full of trembling. Their motions are
exact & definite.

When the movement is underway each feels
a deep shock at seeing the other like this.
He is his everyday self, yet he is Another.
The hunters assume their positions in the bush,
the emu-man at the waterhole lowers himself
very carefully, each muscle straining, for
the careful drink of the bird. He takes a
long slow drink, then upright a slow shudder
convulses his upper body, which shakes all
in one piece. He is big strong Beautiful Bird,
totally revealed & exulted.

*

It says in the titles before the film:
this film is not to be shown within
Australia. We understand: for the
white camera (another actor of another
tribe) to perform the ritual on sacred
ground would strike a profanity of
severe fire.

A MATTER ABOUT DOING

less & less they found,
more & more they found,
how unusual it was
for anyone
to practice seriously
an art, a ritual, a magic
in the soicety....

* *

The mountains the sea the sky the earth.
Enough material to work with: the way of least materia,
the muchness of sun, the lack of complication of actions.
Nothing is important but being still. Being quiet,
loosening the bands around the head so the cats come
out to sit also in the sun. It is not that they think,
I'd like to sit there also (that is *my* way of thinking)
or that they want anything from me. It is the unusual
ness of the figure sitting still & large where nothing
was formerly. They would attend to rat, rabbit or
giant in the same way.
We don't have to work all the time.

We have achieved this. We do what we want; we have only to know what we want; it may be work of a new order. The work we want most to do is the hardest to do, the work that is easiest to do is what fits into the patterns we have grown up knowing. How long can I sit here thinking & writing before I stop my pen (my sun) and move to a level of doing, only another form of opinion, away from making constructs & finding older constructs, & again fitting myself into the parts of the material world, doing "my part" -- arranging and rearranging the material things of my world. Writing has to do with things, but living must have less to do with things if writing is to go on, as it wants to.

The words go on walking in my mind, trudging forward on a separate path from the brain which has commanded that I get up to fill the bird-feeder, get a sweater for Rob & one for me. Self-imposed necessity, actions which aren't at all necessary except in the mind of the doer. If they were the physical stage business of the doer alone, the mind and words running along in dialogue, that would be one thing: but the path of thinking is diverted by doing most practical physical tasks, and the build-up of necessary acts only enlarges, once begun. The preparations of the magician, but how many magicians prepare & never enact the magic.

So the poet must learn the science of *hands off*, what doesn't need to be done or thought about, where the energy is only wasted if it travels there; must beware rebuilding the celestial city described only in materialistic terms.

It must be a matter of degree, of quantity rather than choice. There is nothing wrong with the new technology, or participating in the garden, the canning, the freezing of foods, the sewing, the making of all the materia we once bought. It is a correct evolution. Yet it is still technology, and the artist must draw his line. I am not more or less wise after canning five jars of green peppers. I know another technological process, am more self-sufficient, I have a new skill in a society that rates technology the highest of virtues. But five jars sit on the shelf, not spiritual awareness, not a penetration into my thought-processes. If I fill up all my time with doing, there will be none to expose myself to the fire. It is not that we can fight all immortals ourselves as the technologist thinks, but that we must realize when our armour is no good (Odysseus standing *still* straight & sturdy in full armor, really believing he can fight immortals)

but is pride & egoism & human small courage. Greater courage is the meekness to become a vessel for the words of the gods, to listen and hear Circe's directions for calming a god by appeal to another god.

So yellow slips away, taking red with it & it all lies on the ground. The leaves aren't shredded, the compost will be slower in making, snow will come & each time I hear the excited barking of the southward geese over the marshes I'll run out to the porch to look, and watch their fading V's with a sense of desperation & loss & unpreparedness the careful farm housewife will never know. & everything will not have been done for winter, there won't be rows of shiny jars on the basement shelves. Not sure of the value of sun or stars or jars, I'll have written this book.

THREE POEMS GREETING APRIL & MAINE ON RETURN FLIGHT FROM KENT STATE

1

Easy as silk lying on new fallen frontier
April proclaims herself, rising, a rush
of heavy wongs from
border-kings, pocket-pools; a chameleon sings
of faery seas

2

Flying back over finally only patched
snow-covered Maine we are quickly inland

try to see key roads & coast of Cape Elizabeth,
briny girl we would recognize & coax into

coming home but the terrain yields like a
dead body to anonymity. Wide road is wide road,

planned oval of certain Scarborough Downs madness
is terrain cut/fried/liced, farms & woods

interact their own social behavior I
only look down, over see, & my plane's

shadow is the Doll's toy all below is meant to
be, a cool sunny day below the clouds.

3

Jealousy envy & excitement
from trying to do

another's work
is soon dead
& boring.

Rain drips
into dark cloudy day,

only seen
when I focus on air

at angles
involving distance!

Make it alive
(a furry animal
reaches inside its skin)

coming from inside the self,
a scaffolding there, a structure

there, which happily
or not so
lives

on the shady side of the street
in the vanquishing anguish
of elms

*

A boy in class says that his pay from his very good job in the munitions factory helped him buy a new car. In his next paper, he proposes war as a good way to eliminate excess people: shrewd & realistic. In a further paper he says if the guaranteed annual income were in effect, he'd spend his time gardening & painting.

Huge crashing boulder of appetite
cascading on angels' downy wings!

Mind-charging cascade of dope-peddling
angel breakers!

Did Hitler harden, garden, have compost, have
composure, prune trees, get on his knees?

Too late for generalities
& too soon for specifics.
Mainly, *too fast*.

THE VISION OF SERIOS

The World of Ted Serios: "Thoughtographic"
Studies of An Extraordinary Mind, by
Jule Eisenbud, M.D. (Morrow & Co.,
N.Y., 1967)

All the world's books sing a song,
a cacophony of sound a rustle of
bird wing of tree limb, a man
three or two peeks up through
soil like new daffodil or crocus shoots
with stems reaching unconscionably far,
with a simpleness of movement & action
that belies perceptual mystic beautiful
raging torrents of
seeing! This man
came out of
nowhere! Came from where we're
all trying to get back to! Came because
on a beautiful spring day with opening of
buds & fields Kerouac bopped down a
San Francisco street with his black chick,
came because a specific dog shat on a
specific lily, came able to project pictures
out of his head of Queen Elizabeth, churches
in Rome, came within the without of our notions

Difficulty of getting the rocks out of
the vegetable garden, of getting psi phenomena
channeled into the brains of two billion empirical
scientists, viaducted over a Chinese wall
seldom traveled by Western man on feet or wings;
do we flow our bodies through spaces we cannot even
tame, through time we cannot even count?

All our rules break down.
As though the air bore pictures from waves,
& all the nations' flags went silently down
at the same hour, never to come up again
until the world behind Serios' pictures
is totally revealed

our language is too old,
our rules & experiments & phenomena are too
inflexible. Still we call the farm workers
in China peasants, speaking thereby of our lack
of familiarity with them, as cozy as we are
with the 12th Century.

Chipping away
with experiments, with grass blades, it rains
Serios & I get wet, the new Jerusalem is not
revealed on Tuewday or Wednesday. Such
patient laying on of hands, it takes. Such
ribald moons, such totally new rainbow dancers.

Perhaps I grow irritated at the
tendency of the seedlings to damp off.
No soil is pure, no method is right unless
it is the most rigid careful one, seeing becomes

speech, expression communication only after months
of rules and elements of conformity. These
many-varied soil-borne bacteria in
amazing web of vascularity my eyes can't peer at
feast in complexity on anything, let out
all evil to vitiate all evil
as Crowley does occasionally only some very
specific times eating human flesh ---

as the fungus feeds on the unfolding cabbage seed,
ringing it with fuzzy base
before it has even turned from
green to white in the sun,
or straightened up; no medium is
completely sterile .
wizards
& demons in Serios' head, retina of untenable
ganglia growing on a mattress of
negative capability,
o mountains o seas
o stars of Maine over Central City mine dumps
where nothing was planted because nothing
was expected to grow, embrace the incredible

ineffable mind of Serios who is not bespeaking
war or politics or peace or famine or race relations
or making any moral point whatsoever about good
or evil; embrace this mind in a warm lovingful
of arms opening the City & the Laboratory &
the Gate, let his heaven be revealed
& this man
be freed in the knowledge that haven spoken,
others heard & gave back
the sign

A PROPOSITION OF MOVEMENT

I am thinking of Christmas
& of whether to go out & buy gifts for my family
& of how women shouldn't have to
band together in flocks to get things done
& of 48 bombing sorties per day
over the Ho Chi Minh Trail to stop trucks
from loading & unloading supplies for a war
& of the land our house sits on how at 4:30 p.m.
the afternoon sunlightslants on the ball he
has flung to me on December second when its
not yet snowed that I try to get Spindle back
into the house inadvertently chasing him deeper
into the woods noticing again while I do
the back of the barn which looks good where we
started shingling blond wood over grey last
summer
& the duck house & chicken house which
maybe we can have some chickens & ducks
in next spring
& how maybe we can live here after all
although there is a war going on
& a new house building in what was a
soft glen with a stone wall alongside it across
the street
even though we are too overblown a giant
balloon fish full of hooks too insensitive
to even know the body of Christmas

Let the Maker be heard.
Let the Soul's parts come together
& violent acts cease for Limbo
& Rebirth
Let all who murder deer & humans & birds

circle endlessly if they do not renounce
their unintentional intentional acts
to make way for those who care for the
land & the Word & the Spirit tucked
in the souls of every livingthing, & the
Way & the Self

* * *

There is a man named Harry Coombs
of Peabody Coal Co. doing strip mining
on the Navaho Reservation at this very
moment. Let him mine endlessly without
stop all his lives in burrows in caves
in tunnels as a snake digging without
surcease Growing up in
Colorado I have listened to the song
of this man all my shadowed life

Let the People grow endlessly powerful
& expunge him & his puny mechanistic
band Make them fly Let the People
again graze at open clean waters, taking
flight to the mesas when fall comes

There is a morphology of landscape
strong as the lines in a palm,
formed when the alphabet was formed,
by black birds flying ovals overhead
This won't be improved by any form of
strip mining

* * *

Let Behemoth reign.
Let the Seamonster come to us,
Let him spread his briny weight
onto all our parts & days
Let the Lord of Light be Him shining
again the stars embedded in all
Our People's foreheads.

IN DARKNESS IS DESCENT

what is a pendulum for
swinging,
back & forth between duty &
pleasure, necessity & luxury,
hatred of the self,
imaging others as ideal,
intolerance for others,
devilish self-satisfaction.

altruism. she remembered that
he watched tv all night & played golf.
& another did this. & that.
Too much detail in the brain,
so one forgets what one doesn't
find relevant to know.

The Other: the only
way to see any thing
any single isolate thing
clearly. As escape (help
with the school help with the child
help with the parents)
as generosity as motive piling on
motive, because the trap door the shit
is swept down is *immediately* underneath
where the horses stand, so they are
standing literally right over their own shit.

which becomes
the main hope
for my garden.

* * *

one forgets what one doesn't
KNOW. care to know.
hasn't absorbed.

* * *

no one lived
on a very lonely street,
watched the postman,
on a very lonely beat.

no one lives
out of the
present moment
only.

I backed myself out,
accelerated,
dashed along watching
gold & golf course &
woods, hoping some
good man wd ride alongside
to shield me from the
cops of anxiety, the
old houses of unknown
constitution. I moved
out of impossible small
moments too tiny to get myself
into.

the head wd seem
to be slitting itself
splitting quite openly
evenly on the chopping block,
there wd not seem to
be enough materia, saw-
dust, good clean ash
to absorb the tension
trickling down the face.

the soldier sd he was circling
in his helicopter & looking down
saw bodies in a ditch. "Just
a lot of people laying out in the open
with red pain over them." The newspaper
prints what it does instead of paint,
& still the questioner ambles on,
over the hill & dale of the Democracy
searching for the honest lamp-lit man
of Justice

whatever they had
spread over them trickles down
our head at the hearing, we're on trial
at My Lai for kittens & dogs & people spawned
by mistake upstream & put to death for no reason.
Hundreds of mosquitoes die in the summer
hundreds of organisms die each day.
We grow confused about what is important.

Pounding behind welling
eyes filling. I keep from destroying
the fabric of the sanctity of
my life order purity by a
hairline, a thin line, a
hair's breath, do they
say, a thin line extending
from his paper off onto the
green painted wooden floor,
up the wall, over the
ceiling's vista.

By a reach into
other than me: there
was a civil war,
where there was that
there are probably ten
happening right now,
men make names for
their insurrections against
one another. Young men
& old ones have made looms
to weave natural wool into
cloth. Put up kites
to get electrical energy
harnessed down into their
hands. Not

that Other is more interesting,
but that in America & everywhere
the self only runs clear by a
transference of the shits he
moved from the swimmingpool to the
grass, that he moved from his diaper
to your suitcase, there is organic matter!
which connects &
becomes part of my chemical head.

* *

it seems every other person
& myself too
& the big cat sunning himself
in the window
is a fraud. Having
rejected the self as fradulent
she saw through everybody
else too, & then that was
boring because it implied standards
of perfection, not a trampoline offbounding

of how dharma things work,
how people who are masters & slaves work.

The standards are undressed.
They are the supports of the trampoline,
crossed bars where underneath we crawl.
An empty scaffolding
when the men have all
gone home, supporting only

PORTRAIT OF THE FATHER

> To their young children, fathers are not
> wont to unfold themselves entirely,
> Pierre. There are a thousand and one odd
> little youthful peccadilloes,that we think
> we may as well not divulge to them.
> ---*PIERRE*, Melville

> (--- *But hasn't he always, anyway, cultivated*
> *that air of mystery to make you* think
> *that?*)

Once I stood in a green bough
of learning, docorating, in a
living room, the Christmas Tree
a few months before I
was myself to be married

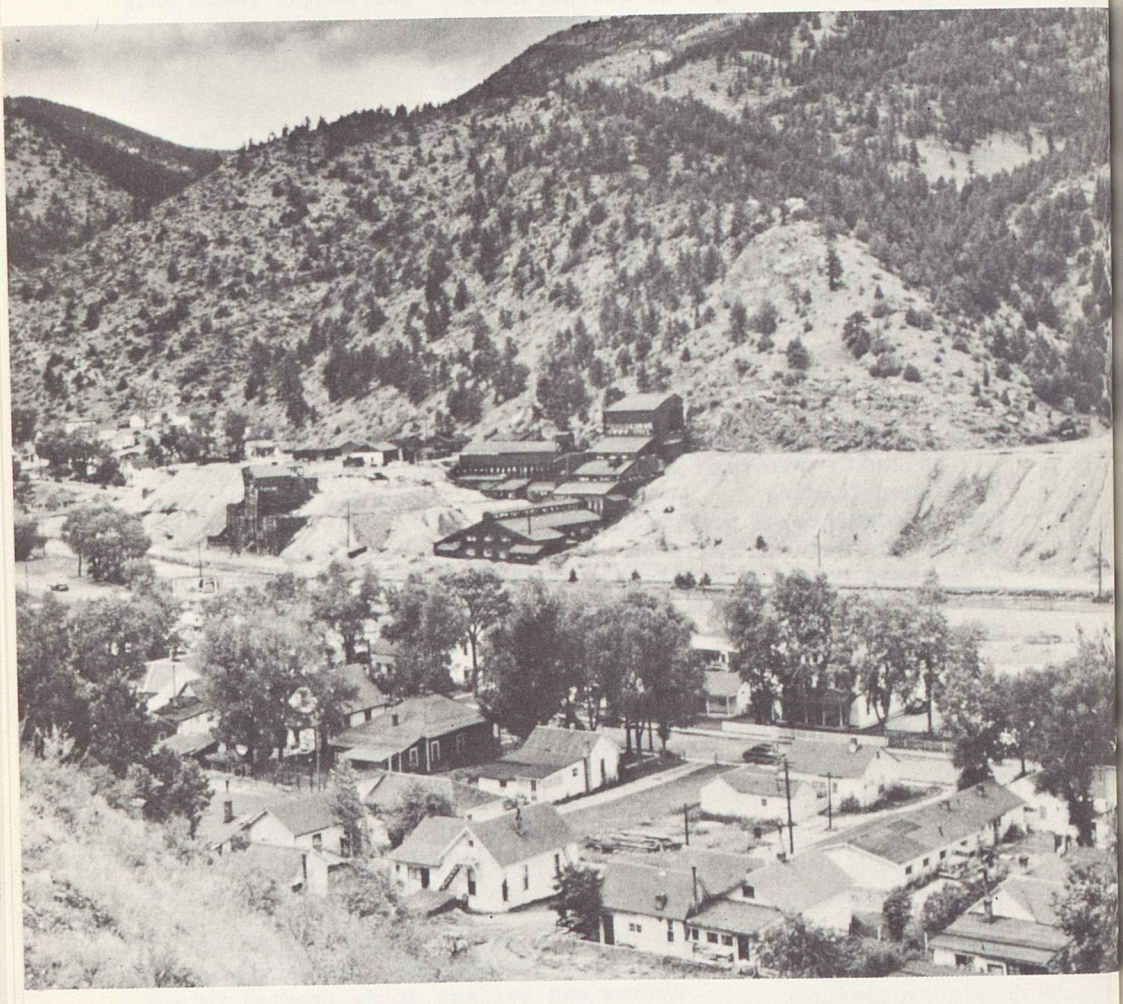
& heard the incredible notion
that my father had been married
before he married my mother,
to a childish woman, he said,
wild & impetuous, it couldn't
last but a few months

in those seconds of realization
of another whole relationship
for my father, which spilled new worlds
of sunshine meetings & fall leaf picnics
into my lap, he who was mature & routine
was not always so; mysterious liasons
& coverlets crowded my mind

watching him carefully place
painted can lids & paper chains on
the Christmas tree, how like my gaze
at him to Pierre's musing stare at the
portrait of his rakish father
which he hung secretively, to get
it out of open light, in his closet

the jaunty air, caught in the portrait
as if he had just dropped in from visiting
the beautiful French girl; his buff vest,
the impetuous set of the dancing-figured
neckcloth,
"Love's secrets, being mysteries,
ever pertain to the transcendent
& the infinite"

O star, o Christmas Tree of
fifteen childhood christmases, O Father as Lover
(her and mine) in your own special world
of romance & mystery,
o infinite world of mysteries unfolding at the
hand of Fate whether we seek or not,
o world of the rainbow unknown &
moon world of the never but always possible
to know, prove to me that this life
I've been leading
has antecedents of more beautiful
mysterious nature, bells on hills ringing
I've heard only internally, in the back of
my invasive mind on quietest hilly nights in
moon-black verdure of summer...



THE MOON IS THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

Semen must be mixing now with blood,
my period shapes itself down so that
i can become aware of its occurrence.
A moving up a moving down.
Walls coated with linings of waxen
vinyl, she lined the cupboards of her insides
with rubbermaid red plastic & hoped thus
to smooth the passage of tissue (who knows
there's not a bit of marrow seeping out
there too) from her insides.

Every woman everywhere
bleeds who has not had something
otherwise untoward happen to them.
On this road alone some must be silently
bleeding now. No man has such physicality
in common, footballgames notwithstanding,
but the real inference of a thought like that
(& my thinking has always been full of them:
that man must have
a penis
those two must make love
she probably bleeds like me
she probably stays home with
children, like I do)

is that one is intrinsically so
different that it is amazing
any one does the same thing, that others
have the same natural functions

because the world has only been created
through me, & everything (war thymus other
countries) is seen only by me, who is the
only person outside able to look at it all.

it exists only because I am seeing it &
will vanish when I stop seeing it

It is the view of a child, they say, or a
person confusing the trees with the neighbors,
or a fool or an egoist, they say.

But perhaps it is true.

LOOKING CAREFULLY

Here is a fish
become other than
what he is, to other
probing eyes becoming
a grass arm, waving
in direction of any
easy current...

A cloud here who's not
what he appears, has staked that
heliotrope mountain
as lover, as breast with
white crested nipple to
kiss & fondle a
mountain who will make love
with this cloud

here is steeple grass
which will form itself
carefully in structures
that on dry land men will
call God's particular home

No other here than a day,
a cat, some birds to make
what one will...

PICTURE OF MOVING PANTS

run on the snowbank
dance on the snow field in a 10' by 10'
square, marking out the garden-to-be
the rows long lines of your feet n. to s.
jump on the bed
lie about hatred
skate on the ice covered with snow fall down
pray for an end to self-conscious prayer
hope for a breaking of essences to further
complexity (jelly-holes of air)
no let-up in energy / capping a wave
carping against a giant sea-monster dragged
on shore left to be cut up by scientists

hug which is the opposite in sound too of frug;
ass-hole my way past you & wish you'd
notice me

looking in all the library stacks watching
pants under the book shelves move by in the
faculty lounges the corridors the cut-up
lunchrooms the outside of the turnstile going
in/be going out, so I can follow you by revolving

Is there a chrysknife buried here
veiled here in this thinking waiting to
trip me up a tongue cheekily lazing
in & among my thoughts, you progress
steadfastly across assorted pieces of
my mind scraping your backlegs together
unhurried movement forward you spindly fly

DISASTER AREA

that place in me
(another kind of place,
probably)
that is far from
being a quiet pool,

a turbulent back-cupboard,
made just of brick & wood,
a cubby-hole of disorder
where everything is to be
thrown out
You must stoop to enter

which is most thrown open
in places just the opposite,
where multiple sets of goods
are stacked & shelved,

supermarkets, discount stores,
crowded streets people in rows
when I'm alone distracted
the pull of those

objects
to be thing

only

A BOTANY OF LOVE POEMS

1

We have made
our own pie.

We have baked our
own hands
into the pie.

They writhe, used
to dry air,
unused to clammy
cherry moistness
surrounding them.

There is no
choice.
We have
baked our hands
into the pie.

2

I wanted
to take your arm
from the windowsill
of the car
as it left

carry it back
to the house
with me.
Perhaps I could
deal effectively
with that small
a part of
you. It is
about all I
could handle:
could apply all
the doctrines &
systems to &
come out with

something that
makes us relate
more finely.

But after all
all there was
left was your
song, coming to
me from a thousand books
books over the
years, that I
used & it is
probably the part of
you you'd have me
have.

3

how each song
is only
one's own

how loving another's
body fights
that slippage of
another's system
like a hood
over the questing
head.

you wd have
that I be turned on
to myself, rather than
Dante, Whitehead, yourself,
he whosoever has made a complex
for himself.

because models become only
molds to fit into, crumble,
the racer who is competitive
loses only to himself.
But its locked into us, like
chorophyll in a plant.

howmuch
you turn
to find the sun is all

4

in the reading,
i could get involved
really only in
the longer poems.

as though there
were time there
to be enticed, unzipped,
played with, exchanges of
understanding to pass
back & forth, time for
the mind to rebell
& get a drink of
water & return

find still there
the same territory
no one gone home

made happy that fix of
multiple vectors sex &
science & whiteheadian
actualities converging
in

a love act

the wasps now
are trusting to
the eves that they
will build their
winter structure
under them, can
say
cover, give us
shelter this winter
be wind
breaker for
us

& that engagement assumes
a faith the house will stand,
day after day, they have
that trust!
that it won't be
destroyed by fire or
an act of God or Love

5

Love cares about itself
as process.
Love is not object.
Love is verb, is the
acting & feeling of
tiny details which
hang together to make
a joyous
structure.

love wants
no object.

it feels very old. I
am treading such
a gnarled, rooty
path in pursuing
your forms, not knowing even
the time-spans you're
taking.
Love is finally
nothing except when
exponented to body:
the desire mine feels for
not yours, but for the
vibrations you make in air

i care about the
broadness of your back
under my hand, not simply
your back, alone in space.

Ursine energy. A botany of
related synapses, teaching
the systemic inversion of
recycling tailspins. Converting
them into fantasy, of using
(as carefully as glass, metal)
longing.

6

Too close up
anything looks scary.
The fire did,
tonguing out of
the basement window,
occupants gone hunting deer to kill,
the fire after them. Real torture
is to continue without end what
you've most wrongly done in life,
thus they will continually have
to rebuild their house through
life & Purgatory & Hell, fire
chasing them all the way through.

Seeing more than autumn orange &
with ordinary reactions of alarm
we called the fire department.
Which volunteered to come,
scattered and a hodge-podge of
hoses, couldn't find the hydrant,
but felt proud in response to need.

Day in & out, each night that fire
& the brinkmanship energy it aroused
fired up my mind.

Your form in the kitchen, arriving
while the ashes were cooling & the
interiors of the neighbor's house were
spread all over the lawn, eating
coffee sugar lobsters clams wine
embedded itself beside the fire,
& now the intensity of both are so
interchangably mixed I find myself
hoping for action & destruction &
repelled by the intensity of your
flame, calling up your name in
disaster warnings to Cumberland County.

7

The whole point of the sexual fantasy
& the magical act, and close attention to
both rituals, is to sharpen the vision get
a detailed take or sighting from a loss of
perspective through immense magnification.

thus, the stronger the lense
(close-up, mescalin, sacrifice
of a cat
the stronger the Force, &
(perhaps) Vision

8

I circle,
lie,
weep,
am frozen
sing.

i want you,
in tremulous divisive
differentiated
ways. in
melting means
which show
what want is,
what you are
who i am, &
am not.
how i am you.
how your energy is
(or always, once
begun
mine.

no one is alone
having once been
in the same room
with another.
& yet with you
in the kitchen i
was silent, didn't
even draw on the
energetic selves which

hold me up, support me
Monday through Saturday.

9

Perhaps the most
delicious
(& oldest
confusion
walks the silent
forest floor
is whether
i want you,
or
the resources
gold, metal energy (urgy
i draw from
you.

10

You come plainly.

You come away
plainly.

Light
behind the rain
makes the sky
light grey.

It is a plain grey.

It tells the story
of unfinished endings
& suspended relationships.

THE LAWS INSIDE

however much you hate it
however much you are tired
& hungry
want Total cereal (the blue box)
with bannanas & cream & sugar so hard
stomach says food,

you stick with it to
become one who works enough
to know the function of a thing
& then be capable in the sunset
of earth viewed from the moon
of describing its metaphysic

it is not Discipline, which
stuck you at the *barre*
your father had built in your
room from a broomstick,
but a sublime that is
uncomfortable & lonely

A LOOK ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Thank You
for all the Christmas Presents
bought in all the Stores!

Thank You for divorce
& apartments taken by middle-aged
single parents so small children or large
can't possibly visit or don't know where to
stay or have a notion of Family burdening
their heads which must forcibly be broken
up like glacial ice when marriages begin to crumble

cf. Wilfred Pelletier, *Childhood In an Indian Village:*

> *We didn't always live at home. We lived wherever we happened to be at that particular time when it got dark. If you were two or three miles away from home, then that is where you slept. People would feed you even if they didn't know who you were. We'd spend an evening, perhaps, with an old couple, and they'd tell us stories. Most of these stories were legends, and they were told to us mostly in the winter*

time. In the summer people would generally take us out and we would do a number of things which would in some way allow us to learn about life and what it was all about: that is, by talking about some particular person and demonstrating what that person did.

So we learn families
are built up and exist
for about 20 years, &
then all one has is relations
with a new unit which is neither
here nor there & hard to find
(cf. Dorn story, *Driving Across the Prarie*)

But to resume the accolades,
Thank You for unreachable
standards of structural excellence
rather than value on
nothing or individual creativity
or mindlessness or meaningfulness
or blankness!

the girl on the society page!
the one on board college an ocean
liner which is sailing into a
Junior Debutante Surburban Universe!

I dreamed i was an
acolyte at a church service
& all my family were
in the congregation & i
didn't know my part kept
making mistakes & my baby
was crying none of my
family wd take care of him
while i had to pour the wine
& pass the wafers
to prove how wrong i was
to be usually otherwise
occupied in ambiguous ways

& childhood sweetheart Leslie Dorn
& i in another dream had
such a terrible argu-
ment in a taxi cab i
wanted to tear her eyes
out i was so mad

RECLAIMING

Words matter,
like seeds

Words separate & intrinsic from clinging
to one another to form complete thoughts.
Words as isolated from one another
as alyssum seeds before border-bower
of pinks & whites has crowned the soil,
separate as single tossed stones
carried with intention to make a
rock wall, seen by the passing motorist
as a hazy blur

Very small things matter.
A political stance, given to change
things in some possible way, if
there are only thirty more years of
this industrial-technological society--
If there are not, if there are,
our same Buddha-acts are quiet, there
is no frenzy living here.
The life slowed to a few carefully reckoned
routines & sparking details,
all only necessary, none extraneous.

*

Too many seeds in one tiny area
& none come up.
Only two seeds to a pot, about
five to a row, in a small box covered then
with a plastic bag.
Separate beads of moisture appear on the ceiling
of the plastic:
There is breath there. Each seed in its own
earth area starts immediately to
project its own silent cycle of
gaseous exchange. Death (by mold) is
neither imminent or assured or staved off
or likely.

RAIN COMES TO MAINE

While it leads fishermen & sailors
to shore, the foghorn is telling people
to come home to their own land & minds forever.

One cannot be "summer people" without dividing
as body divides, as soul divides when not joined.
Here is like where you came from,
the great vacation is illusion.
A tired rhetoric of rocks that belong first
to fishermen, then to all others whose
thought has lulled itself beyond sound & life.

Even the cricket has stopped.
Continuous chirping in his own mind
enough to lull him to sleep;
as we sleep earwigs in the corn tassels
burrow further down in their moist night.

JULY 29 1971

i am woman, she said

as such am mammal
have breast come home in calm or
turmoil can feed child
look forward to holding it close,
essential union with the world,
feed it with my breasts, first one,
then the other.

As such
am not fish or woodpecker or eel.
Reside in man's dream, as they do,
yet the Muse of my dream is not myself,
is larger man than man, is bird-of-man.
He who is nameless but whose face
changes hourly, each day until a shift in
tide/time pulls him away & pulls sleep
up closer around my neck.

In day my descriptions are hardly
what man, his newspapers, his stock markets,
value. There are no parades &
there are no tuna contests.

To call it hallucination or
illusion veils the mirror
separates him from me; when he steps
into it, he swims in a part of himself
he's lost
separated always in this way
we pull, pulling in a tide & letting it go,
he sees me as Moon pulling on his cock
as I see Bear entering me, animal
star in both of us

But a stream opens out into a valley,
& a hoard pulling a carriage comes out,
and an earwig looking like a scorpion,
fighting against the watery sea,
pincers working. They issued
before man issued, coming wet & lying
for centuries by the shore. It is a
slow walk upward, & really, we
have been here before.

FOR SYLVIA PLATH

We die only if we kill ourselves,
& even then, how final do you think it wd be?
A plant, can it kill itself,
or does it simply succumb, given not enough
of what it needs,
& soundlessly, without obituaries or furors,
gives space & fertilizer for another plant?

Natural phenomenon in our garden:
the sunflowers are so high.
They kiss the black lamp over the door.
I live, because of that; a vine,
unidentified as most of my life will be
to those who come after or are contemporaneous,
waves in the wind, leans forward.
We learn: that listening to people
is hard because they don't use the words
would express their condition.
We learn: rhetoric flows so easily, so quickly,
words
are gold after the gold standard has long gone.

A KIND OF CERTAINITY

I think I have never met a man who was
not anxious.

It all depends on the disguises
we adopt.
At one party, unable to find the host,
unable to see anything except the person
next to you, we adopted the pose that it
was all mindless, that chaos was so certain
we would chalk off reason.

The people coming to dinner tonight
are anxious in ways the opposite of me:
while I am worrying is my house neat enough
for them, they are worrying will we show
how middle-class & over-thirty we really are.

We are bound; we are harder on ourselves than
need be; see that everything else is also
bounded by its limitations. The butterfly hasn't
infinite choice of flowers, probably has really
very few that are appropriate for its use.

The sunflower is certainly bound by conditions
of soil, sun & rain; but we again bound ourselves
needlessly to stop what we are writing (as is
totally possible) & go out & water it now.

Living is learning the right time, the wrong time,
the inbetween time, when time doesn't matter,
the time outside time, what blooms under what con-
stellation, that such a thing even happens, when it
matters, when it is right to talk about, when it
is right to say, it matters less right now.

But finally we strive for the opposite of a pose:
to know ourselves & what we are doing all the time,
to be not fooled or dissuaded from the
trying, always the trying is the hardest.

THE FILAMENTS

We're both wound tight, separate threads
thrown out in the centrifuge
show dusky monuments of a binary code.

Thus messages fly in, above and about relation:
mind-touching, I feel myself unwinding unevenly
thread running too fast from above,
lumbering around my parts from below

but it feeds into an interlocking pattern
where you are too, ceaselessly unwinding,
no more able to stop your movement than
the sunflowers can stop their total buffetings
by the wind, a hurricane up from North Carolina
(arbitrary, as arbitrary as all weather & birth
& soul-life are) to which they must dance & flutter
ceaselessly, ruffled up with each new gust,
swaying, already tired because of such a heavy
    yellow head, bowed --

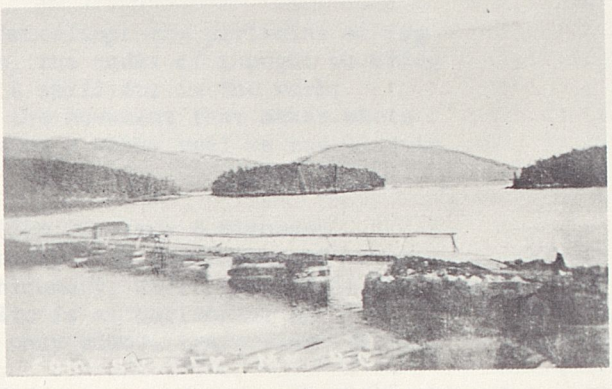
We pass each other, screaming particles of
honesty under our breath, dust motes on the thread
unseen by others but recognized by us as everything,

it is all in traveling: the particles of fog
before my eyes, the nodes of thought we bring
to each other & spill out in the work;
the progress, the movement that makes whole
items, that makes a webby veil we can live in

Wrapped
(rapt, thus, like Odysseus & Diomede)
in schemes finally with one another &
the night's chicanery, we're encased in the same
flame. The fire is as horizontal as
time & thread only allow, traversing itself,

burning itself from one end to another & back again.
We're left whole, to any visible eye, stiches of
a great web as flax is vessel of Another Being's
growth.

TALES



she didn't want to look back
Tuwaqachi she didn't want to look ahead the green morning in all its dew & sounds condensing into the bright white soft clouds

Below her open window sounds of the baby clanking pan lids out from the oven drawer onto the floor, lining them all up, getting the right lid on the right pan. Now taking them one by one, lid by lid & pan by pan, out onto the porch. We cannot worry all the time about how creative another's play is, how green the grass is growing, whether the sun shining is really the yellowest twang it can muster on the earth whether that is here in our yard. Simply to change the thought to "where is the sun shining now how many cornfields, what nooks & caves & grasses with llamas walking slowly on hillside steep paths is it shining on" is enough; everything, including our forms of play & our forms of creativity, will not be institutionalized. My friends help me cut down the forsythia but already in their generosity there is a price to pay, they are laying on me rules of pruning, etiquette of the well-trimmed garden(& by implication the well-trimmed poem) & how it should grow. & yet I have asked for it, I have gestured hopelessly to overgrowth, & they have responded with solution, efficency & action.

Ruthlessly, it is even more confusing than this. Comparisons are odious, because it is everything. It is all void.

Burridge, *Mambu:*

What sort of people were these waitsikin,*white men? They scoffed at sorcerers, but were mortally afraid of invisible things called germs; they preached brotherhood and ate in splendour alone, despising Kanaka food; instead of dispensing their wealth in a feast, they hoarded it; they were strong men and fierce, quick to anger; they expected obedience and enforced it when necessary; they had access to all kinds of material goods which came to them in ships in a constant stream. To be sure, after days of hard work, they, the Kanakas, were given some money to buy goods from the trade store. But Europeans merely sat in their chairs. They perspired as they sat, without working. They wrote letters, kept goldfish in bowls, cultivated flowers, cooed at pet parrots, played cards, drank rum, slept late, washed frequently, shouted, gave orders, ate magnificently -- and still there seemed no end to the goods that came to them. Even the dullards*

who shied from thinking about so large a problem could not be other than interested. Information about white men and what they did was important not only to avoid imprisonment, to order personal and social relationships, but also to gain freer access to material goods. But between information and the ends it might win lies understanding.

meaning *support*, as Brakhage used to say,
to stand under means
behind there punching
with the same ends in mind

How to phrase, without processes
of condensation entering in, that
works bring different ends,
a profit motive brings a stream of
(destructive) goods, feasting
brings mutual equality & benefits
The circle encircling all the
ends we mark off is by very movement
of line & circle, creative

Instead of a feast, a planting
of flowers, a moving of pots & pans,
an ordering of the entropic beauty
in the forest, a gathering up of
the stamen dispersal natural to
foodstuffs/toys
Planting flowers vegetable tubers rocks
is the holiest of holy on my ground
(my holy sacred ground,
I secretly breath to the river & the
crocodile)

The rot of witchy preconceived images
flying away to stick on the pages
of womens-magazine
the energy,
thrown out by the wheel,
splattered on walls trees woodwork sinks

how say you, in direct address to
everybody because it is either everybody
or nobody you care about (meaning
is either everywhere or
nowhere) in order to find order
to collect this energy,
or how do you,

which so has a tendency to
fly out in worthwhile causes,
actions & otherwise proper-ties
collect this bird which so wants
to leave
before the point of discovery

Who pulls the string. Who'll open the doors attached to the strings which will pull my head upright, jerk all the teeth out?

I still wonder, when an airplane passes very low and the rumbling is very loud, whether it is us this time will be bombed, be crashed into, whether the freak accident (and we think, all war is a series of freak accidents) will happen to us: PLANE RAMS MAINE HOUSE, charred in a second, all our complexities & delights & Robin's squeals of joy and confusion snuffed out in a second (it is a media cliché we have internalized) no time even to run to the showers; as I take a shower I think of sad people who thought they could escape flames by standing under a shower head spewing water.

There is no real escape. No diversion is possible, since even in diversion we come up against our selves, up against ourselves, up against the problems that first beset the teenager, the child pumping the swing; skill, cunning, wisdom notwithstanding.

In some ways we know it all, we know too much, it is all too easy. It is easy enough to build the bookcase, place the gardening books on it, *McCall's Gardening Book* next to *Organic Gardening and Farming*, read it all, go out and mow and clip and plant and water and mulch and compost and keep track, enter the incredibly dogmatic world that gardening can be, compare one's self to the garden here and the garden there, until the garden becomes simply an extension of the house; Flower Shows instead of Home Shows instead of Beauty Pageant. I buy a three-pronged fork for 44¢ at Arlan's and like my tools, search all over the yard to recover the bright orange clippers left by the mulch heap, but the time I count and reweave inside is spent talking to you, threading the incredible giant conversation we fashion as a rug to sit on, Robin playing at our backs in the sandbox. We are estranged from where we are and would seek even further estrangement as the only fertile condition, we talk about it, but we seek further : want to be burdened with the beetle's quest for food and water, want to help the barn swallow to get out, we would be driven mad with all we want to do and all we are alienated from. The new people across the street have this morning put up a flag pole with American flag to go with:

house

astroturf

swingset

front lamp

driveway

& are seen each morning, the man putting it up; each evening, the man taking it down. We think of getting a Whole Earth Flag and going through the same ritual but we want really to curl up in the earth, not signify it. Anyway, we're here there and everywhere, the sun beats down, the sun spins us in its web. There is a world to be built, anxiety can get out only so many ways before it tremens the body, the bird in the barn is this morning either dead, out, or asleep on the rafters.

how
do
I
put
these
blocks
up.

Stacked one upon the other, inverted so the blue pail stands on the tin bottom of the can, so the funnel goes on that, and a ring around the funnel's tip. & if you can't build it up you can knock it all down, that is just as satisfying at one stage of your life.

how
do
i
hold
my
head
up.

a harder question, but the same, really. put it on backwards, sometimes it stays on more easily like that, or make a lot of noise in the room & drown out the buzzing in your ears, or get a lot of things going at one time: the washer broken, he typing, the baby yelling with joy at the noise of the washer going, you having to go to the bathroom & the water boiling for coffee ready to pour through, & then you don't hear the buzzing, or worry if your head is on straight or backwards or allright. If you have eyes you can see to get up the stairs, make the decision of whether to disturb him, you are feeling ok. & then everything falls into its place (which may be the blocks falling over since some institutions need to break down & crumble) & you can shit & pour the water over the coffee & the bobby pin falls down into the bowels of the washer so it whir/whir/whirs free, without any limp or catch, and you can worry again whether you can hold your head up. One goes from

questioning statement to didactic absolute. It is the way with all teachers. These propositions:

1. either everything is free or nothing is.
2. either everyone is free or no one is.
3. either you are covering everything up or all is totally bared.

(America, my love sits open
to everyone a spotted calf a fatted
cow, analyzing it from abroad is no
different or more objective or better
because one is already under its spell
to be analyzing it at all

Once they had made love they were ensnared, they had dodged themselves into getting quite deeply involved with one another. They could part only as enemies killing each other or as connected lovers: he tried the latter & when she said no he had nothing to do but kill her & everything around her that reminded him of her, which was oikos, the whole created perceptual world. You can't go back to the wife & kids in Astoria after a night smoking mellow hash & a naked soft chick in your arms who is so cool she actually forgives you for the 50-yard dash, but indicates also that it won't be the same another time & that actually there won't be another again, this is a one-night stand, Joe. & its ok. Not embarrassing. All that is too different (for Joe. he is a good joe. Always the same old Joe.) Too different too different for Joe.

Even a man's work bares itself. He stood in front of the furnace, shoving in the bars of liquid steel. His feet up on the desk, he dictated to his patient secretary. There is nothing more behind it than he himself, & everyone can see everything but most people don't look because they don't want to see be reminded of their own little punyness. Everyone can see everything by the stance of his desk & his secretary & by the tone of her voice & his voice to her, by the window they collectively look out on, although through the window out doesn't reveal much about *them*.

Such absolutes are necessary more as morality than truth. You either wish to be free, or you wish to encase your body, tighten your headstrings, lace up your cunt, buy buy buy things to plaster over your body. But no one attempts to completely reveal himself to another all the time, there are angers that are let pass, moments of depression, even whole events that are not told to the other. She had called this silly man on the phone, gone through three calls all of which were a waste of time and energy, and she didn't bother to tell him that. & what happens is not necessarily happening only to be communicated: much went on during the day that she stored to make mental models for things that had to be worked out gradually.

The work too bares itself, bares more than the man behind it. Shows exactly its problems, the problems of the maker & the making, the impurities mottling the gold betray the process' flaws. There is nothing more behind the work than itself. & that is possible because like the tree (a sacred ash) it has everything in it, touches and makes everything, is the beginning and end of everything, contains all cycles of natural energy in its workings. She saw camels rigging to ride over the slopes & rings walked of their own accord, freed from hampering men and women who loved each other, serenading turtles came out to dance. Send me some licorice, she thought. Send me a way to spell my name
that doesn't
rhyme.

Paterson, the water below the falls, the park. Just thinking of certain things made her happy, brought out the birds of courage who usually lived in the barroom watching the Game of the Week. Doing the dishes the friend asked where she'd met him, "He's seemed to be around forever," she said laughing, and she (herself) agreed. That was the trouble, it was too shes, or two shes, to distinguish herself too much from the other was to lose grounds for the conversation (one would have to get up and go home and since she was the guest, it would have to be her, how could she go anywhere, she lived here). So one dried and the other washed, and so trying not to be different from the guest so she would feel welcome and at home she told everything in a way that would appeal to her, make the guest not seem outside on the porch, make herself not seem too freaky or zoopy. "He was a friend of a boy I dated, & then I just became friendly with him, and we talked about writing for about a year (meaning Nothing Serious to her) & we dated other people & each other (dated! dig that baby) and then we lived together and broke up, and then got serious and decided to get married." Which told nothing, about as much as Archie and Veronica and Betty. The friend focused, sincerely, with some interest, on how she hadn't known they lived together the summer between junior and senior years (as though the summers concealed the Great Secrets and everyone returned to college a little more worn & certainly with new mystery and privacy) and she realized that was interesting to the guest as she had started dating just after college and was now in the world of whether to sleep with or not, through it probably hadn't progressed to whether to live with or not. But she didn't encourage it, spun off instead to some other conversation, because it wasn't her world & didn't hold her interest. History was bending backwards before their eyes and she had to follow it to Cro Magnon if not further, edging and edging and wedging herself into nooks and crannies for the ride to see changes from traveling to staying in one place, changes in utensils & the coming of Agriculture, new tools, a choice of technologies.

& that was ultimately selfish, & that was ultimately power & perhaps glory.

The friend went home finally & the power company wrote an article in a national newsmagazine on how environmentalists

who wanted the power comapny to use less heavy-density fuel smoke should understand everyone's desire for power. Their last sentence was *Let us go forward together with the power* and *the glory*. It was probably one of a humdrum hundred limited puns they made at home while sharpening the dog shears around the swimming pool: the need for Power, Power to the People, etc. All terrible & true & laughable & america. No, world.

He held a thin black crayon & drew a thin line (it was as hard as he could hold it and a very thin line) which extended over the paper and snaked onto the green-wood floor. A green-wood turtle came up & asked him, little boy, when are you going to sing for us? He was embarrassed and wondered what he had done right or wrong and if it had been ok to draw the thin squiggly line at all or where. What was wrong? What is ever wrong? How can you know what people are objecting to when they say No, Robin

* *

Cats & mice were his first book. *The Country Mouse and The City Mouse*, but it boiled down, without the words, to cat chasing mice, mice sitting around a table eating food, and two other stories about a crow and different animals, and a dog who fell in the water getting his bone or looking at himself or something. Or perhaps they were all one story, a giant myth or fable with a thousand morals, all the animals knowing one another and getting together in another book all on the same page, the dog and his bone sitting around the table with the crow and the cheese and the animals who tried to tempt him to drop it, and the cat and the mice who were together anyway always, anyway.

DAMPING-OFF

When seeds damp-off, they just never come to anything. They are either suffocated by too much moisture in the soil, or it is too dry, or they simply never get started. If you put a plastic bag around the flat & try to keep the moisture in, you will probably not let enough air in either, even though it is lovely to see beads of water condense on the plastic, & to think that their own moisture-making is enough to keep them going. But the seeds will stay there & soon mold grows around them from stasis and suffocation and too much moisture, not enough light and air to even begin the love affair with the Sun.

* * *

He was... so outside, so formal, so far-away. In a Faraday cage, emeshed in soundlessness. So already having flown the coop, as if he was gone before he ever got there. A steel formality condensed around his eyes when she looked into them, moving from one to another, searching them for a sign; she tore into them with the look of a Confederate soldier straggling behind the troops, trying to get back to Lee & searching the eyes of a black maid to tell if her mistress was friend or foe, Southern or Union, but instead of a strong hint either way he only said, tensely and hurriedly, "I can't come," meaning the end of an Ives symphony of fantasies, meaning the end of a wild montage of longings for him, of his arms around her, which had nothing to do with the necessities (the centerings) of her life(all of which changed center as a circus easily changes rings for the next act),which had nothing to do with anything except what was inside her head, which perhaps had all to do with everything.

Meaning he couldn't come to the party, but he could come to the reading, but he couldn't sit with them, he had another appointment and had to leave early. Just barely hanging in there, she thought, *wants out*. Let him out.

He was nothing more than a fly which distracted her attention from her doings, from the way the sun kissed the corn seed that perhaps would come up, if she planted correctly and did the right things to the soil & kept it moist enough but not too moist. It was good to watch him in detail. It was good to see him at whatever the occasion; he was the only interesting person in the whole town a castle could be built around, who had any mystery at all. He looked different on different days:

sometimes wan and old, hair straggly; she dug watching how he scraped his short back legs together, how he proceeded over a piece of fruit with his sucker down, knee-deep in juicy pulp. His hair got longer, he looked more desperate, more up against it, as the fall wore on. When it was too difficult to think through anything else, when she wanted to relax in absolute laziness, when all her possibilities were lost on the horizon, she had thought of him.

run & dance & sing & jump & lie &
skate & fly & pray & pant & hope
for no let-up in energy capping
carping hugging frugging ass-holing
my way past you, looking among all

the library stacks & lunchrooms &
faculty lounges & corridors on
the outside of the turnstile going
in on the other side of the triangular
bulletin board going out

is there a chrysknife veiled
here a tongue cheekily lazing
in & among my thoughts of
streaking steadfast progress &
movement forward you old fly you

& that was a lazy way to be. So much needed thinking about, but it was a good trip, better than a niacin burn; everything outside of his circumference was rendered duller, less material. & perhaps her eyes too were immaterial, perhaps he was so internalized that finally he didn't count.

If you only rely on your eyes, your other senses weaken. The trip was in quarter-time, and she was at half-mast: waiting for his death & unsure of herself, because she didn't rest any longer on her own, but on his movements: where was he, would she see him -- the ultimate in dependency. She loved thinking about him, and yet she realized it was clutter in her mind: that if she could fill that niche with something else, she could go on and do the world's work and her own. But it was as though she was imbedded in a wall, sandstone reaching down to her skirt. She was very heavy, & very old, moved very slowly.

Particulars invented particulars. The necessity to make the cake invented the necessity for the eggs to be separated, whites from yokes. But was anything worth it? Why question this? Celia Thaxter didn't. Was there anything but tiredness, a lack of

power, a certainity that one's life could be gone in the next plane flight, that one's own name, however loved or however beautiful was gone in a ceremony, was not known or valued by anyone but one's self? Was she over-educated for absorption in the separating eggs, or not educated enough?

Coming out
(of the movie house, of the blacksmith's shop, of the town square, of the train station, of the bus station, of the restaurant on Fifth Avenue, of the restaurant on Avenue D, of the restaurant down by the docks, of the classroom building, of the love-spate)
of course I say to you (she thought)

Defined, it was...
& then say,
Any old way.
Because it doesn't matter finally, & others besides me can say it better anyway.
That is the impotence that everyone in this country feels who depends on someone else totally, only those who have lit a fire under themselves escape that feeling.
& she didn't care whether, finally, he was one of those or one of these.

I saw it that way that day, she thought. & that is enough, it was how it looked then & this is how I described it, and that's good enough. But nothing ever ended that way, & so she saw him everywhere once she had seen him out on the street, or across the lunchroom, like a lightbulb that stays in the mind after the light has long flashed, & everything she wrote had him in it, every stone had his name on it. Celia Thaxter had

a sharp
shooting isle of shoals
strewn between the ocean's
eyes, one finger down
the barrel & one
on the trigger,
we do certain violence
to ourselves
& our flowers

There is a whole world out there of real things. Melville, to begin with, & Barnum & Bailey. The vomit of the slimy & sludgey sea.

Lindy Hough was born in Denver, Colorado, in 1944 on July 4. In a sense she was born "into" poetry, with John Ciardi her godfather and her father the poetry editor of the *Denver Post*. She grew up alternately in the city of Denver and the mountains of Colorado, attending Kent School for Girls, and later leaving Denver for the East to attend Smith College. It was at Smith that poetry replaced dancing as her main creative form, though the years of ballet developed a keen awareness of measure and technique and a sense of form and rhythm that is present in all her work.

She has taught in the English departments of Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti and the University of Maine at Portland. Two other books completed by her are in preparation for publication: *Poems of the Fourth House* (to be done by Black Sparrow in 1972) and *Cro Magnon* (to be published by Big Venus of London late in 1971).

She is married to Richard Grossinger, with whom she has co-edited *Io* since they were both undergraduates in college, and has a son, Robin, born in June of 1969.

two dollars

FIG. 1.

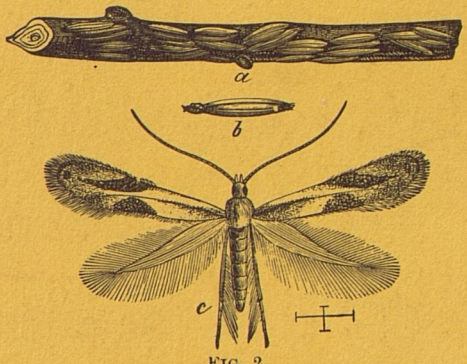
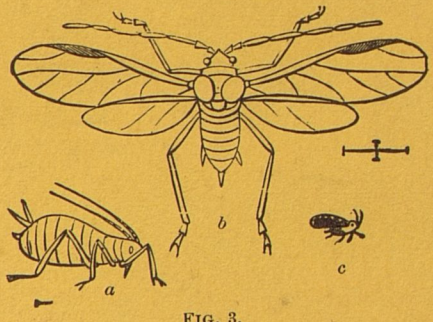


FIG. 2.



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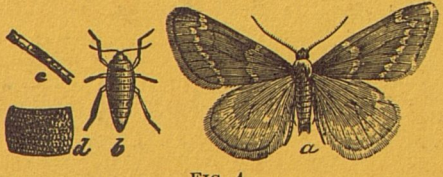

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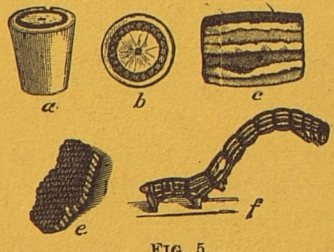

FIG. 5.

Io/#11