

The Empty Stations

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The Empty Stations

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Song I

Each morning I recite the spells

all-powerful grammatical exercise
this is the dead man's book, his
speech difficult to understand
death difficult to understand

buried vertically under the apse
(every book is a dead man's book)
roving in a papyrus boat he
mothers himself

from the East
buried in the tree
buried in the house beam
raises the house around him
at daybreak

breaking into two lands
motions with his fern that last
moonbeam of dream memory
slipped away for this harder architecture
while she walks about with his essence.

Nu becomes Nout
the watery mass of of
spilled by the river.
Her walk
divides the world

her river
the words it takes me all day to cross.

Song II

But I was distracted
in the circular park its
shit smell by a bird in
the ring of flowers
as if I were not ready
or I had already passed
through this prayer, air
opened in me
I breathe the shit in
the deep said words which were
not those I said I said
thou art in the Sektet Boat which
traverseth the heavens
from the westward bench
past the walkway to the garden,
our secret book a holy smut
the dead recite until they wake up
until you look close at the word
and see someone peeking through
like a portrait of your dream

it isn't quite right
the technical a philosopher's
half-truth,

star boat traversing the arched
goddess, sky span, mispronouncing half the
constellations. The goddess knows—
the woman on the other side.

By the time you see this

you will have been devoured by
the boat as it
 means across the heavens

begun with a bad breath
the boat slowly pushes out
past the flotsam the shifting signs
you would give anything to know
I can almost read but not quite the air clears and then I'm out of it.

Song III

I am with a hot humid air. The earth as if a man lying on his
back. Our foolish vigorous naming of things. What
does the water say when the lid's on
a genie trapped between us and heaven. A sort of rain
between you & the next thing you see

the road between the thighs that does not
go anywhere
rain.

Not until we spent the day naked
in Manhattan, sunlight from your sister's
open windows did I realize you were healing me.

To lift the lid and let water
let genii speak

in this wet muggy summer
enclosure
from which I was born.

Raining out over the rooftops
someone says all the words
I refused to say with you the clatter
of hidden things the dead man's
heart thumps on the tin roofs
of the world
and a violin
wherever these things are heard
(for I am the pianist who never
learned to play
hear only the music of the atmosphere)

Starboard Strauss
a flag catches
the windy variation
time's peristaltics
I recognize the old mechanics
stamped on the image
I have known you
girl on the Apidanus
my weapon in hand
as I trod through the grassy book.

I have seen that rain before.
Someone runs off with your name I call out but this.

Song IV

The storm that passed without a trace
what part of language was it
you came in soaked & now on the
dry ground of this 'made up' memory
I realize it was your passport

not the wetness of the fact
nor the light but the touch
slanting in from the roman blinds
complicates us.

Always moving somewhere another
pair of our otherwise simple hands:
a touch walked in backward on a ray of light
to drip on the hardwood floor.

Gentle ibis your hermetic Toth
in the face of my christian etymologies

as you take off your coat and
make coffee taking a swig of milk
from the container that expires today
July 4th

 since the first instance, incident
the ghost is there entire
awaiting synchronicity

with the will, to touch at the right time
with the light as it appears this transmutable
what am I talking about:

raining sun of Occitan on the oak floor

the ibis-word in my third hand

brings coffee to my thousand mouths

still crowded with the day's words

what to say to that persistent thing it's still standing there.

Transformations I

All gone. Left me, yet
whatever finds my wail
I continue to marry: you
enter, no longer empty
handed. A place
 the mystery of
love visits. And her own
scrupulous city I remember
I watched her hand's
convulsive turn the key
of her, sleepy vertiginous
fear of someone having seen.
I saw that. Body lexicon.
Book of dream words, fluid
ground of the place so near
we don't know where it is.
The song changes,
beach now or fir lined
 the roads lead here.

(To her.)

You must take them all,
(they say) but we know how
to read this bible. Stand in the center
of town until you become every flower.
Until her hand unfolds these pansies (pensées).

*

Water is best to sing of
water splashing
all over the gold
is song. To touch the facts
of will. (Her will.) Back in this town
the wild offshoots, play of her
fingers untamed from the plant

this everywhere of muggy
America; fruit rotting on a kitchen table
in Brooklyn, the other side of a coin

what we spend is its currency, night bud
you (me), stranger, touch open & let loose
this moon
to roll down the stairs of this valley.

*

Soaked in my room after the restaurant
where I inquired after you and was told
you had gone home
to shower (!?) I sat
at the bar until they asked me what I wanted.
“Nothing” I said and went
to soak the other half
back here.

I refuse the word that won't come true.
The waitress who never came back.
Remember when you were an Orphan
picking your way through the foggy backroad
and wished it was all the time a warm moist night?

The memory is where it happens.

Your absence this pale black-haired moon
says the rain was worth it.

Worth what?
Something on the tip of my tongue.
Glint of gold beneath the wash

a moon business
of jilted lovers, one of you is collateral,
I can only see her with one eye closed.

Song V

Quick, while it rains
and the train
goes by, the message
you come with

come with what you know.

*For I am whose word says
a dove, a daughter
you know where.*

I know you. Or what you mean
I the messenger who flew
from the ring, that circle with a man
in it, garden of all that. From
that green to this blue, the great flood
of colors we could never tell apart. I flew into that
tree with no one there to hear it.
Swallowed in the wingbeat, alternate seed
o crow that goes white in me

o turning of the crow.

*totum consistit
in ignis regimine*

take off your coat, while I'm empty enough
to hear what the trees say
and the mirrors with nothing in them.

Carmen

The chorus
like a pack of Barreiros
close off the street.

There's no moon! She lies one of those
lies that leave only the amorous word
to talk among the sun-paled

green and blue cars:
a ring of stones
in the faery world

bearing on the cross-roads.
Intersection
is exchange

of offerings, breaking dollars
it's market day
for the skyless stars

empty handed merchants
buying with their eyes
word-salt on night's flint teeth.

The dance is economics
you tango
all the corn I never had
on a street I've never seen

just the salt and fire of it
as the palm fronds by my open window
swell this picture of Spain.

The McNair-Lowry Line

1.

Facing one another:

what does the table say when you come near
how happy are you to transcribe it.

The give and take, not resemblances, not discriminations.

Public park concrete table, sunken metal rod
chessboard top

it's clear crystal, *I say everything, anything.*

Long diagonal adventure of my bishop,
running down Washington Ave. City-worth
of faces going on there, known place
image undimmed by sight:

lay of blueprint. You know better than what's there.

A one-sided discussion in True Mind,

Vishnu sleeping in the earth: people
crossing under the sign;

Blue awning of Lincoln Station,
Haitians carrying roast peanuts, blood zodiac-
food is only what it feeds.

Air, Bananas,
food that is not food. Meat that is not meat.

Keen places straddling store-fronts
unaware you married someone buying an ugly
green felt chair other side of this
ice-cream store.

Walls that are not walls.
A white ford truck on the corner, thighbone
plastic-tied where the grill was — voodoo-machine
blood to power the living god, the rod, driving a car

you would never know where.

Still in the park

I eat another banana, cheaper than bread, lighter than air. o

constant city

I glide along the whole

finding my fragments:

from Lincoln Station through

Tom's Diner, dining car

hidden behind pansies, distractions, hanging flowers

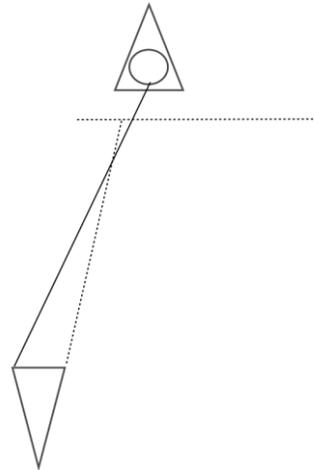
they let me in early, prepare the old

way station- then off

Washington Ave., until the left

of Lowry Triangle, a figure 8,

no bone machine could drive.



2.

Starring in my dream
awake like some main-de-gloire,
Hamlet-like, ghost-knife in my hand
to kill the voodoo priestess.

Glowing thing woke up both
hands on my cock, scepter, Sigurd
run-through night, through
zodiac . save the priestess.

It's the map I'm angry about
dragging on the rest of your life
there is no grid, taking off her shoes
triumph of stars over the city.

Incontrovertible, long subterranean geometricity still in planning. Still in
the dirt. Worm we can't get rid of. I mean in the city plan, hard-hat, the
measuring foot. It haunts the line of measured streets. To survive.
Measureless, among sand and rocks, shells: what's washed up is nowhere.
The low grumbling sea draws its fuck you across the horizon. That's all
you can count on.

That's all. Poems say so: life's noise wrapped around our horizon note. The
open mouth. Cave stretched under plexus. My bare foot
in the hexameter of grass plots.
Even if it's nonsense, my foot, the sea was there: the sound of a mouth,
speaking itself; only this kiss could stop our incessant lying.

The mouth is a foot. I walked a hundred miles in you. The book
I wrote on the roof of the cave

says so. Dew our salivary testament;
proof is what soaks your shoes.
Whatever comes. Sympathetic
Nervous System dance with body's
projections. My tongue was in your mouth all along.
Chronicler of the outside limping towards you, uneven platitudes
only you can make true. The Cattle of Helios you lead into the sun.
Swim up the tributaries. Back through the ink.
If I knew what I was saying it would say this.

Refusing to define it. What comes against these other magics. That I do is
enough. From this center I react, train crawling north still above ground,
fog and rain trails, umbrella hat and rain-jacket soaked through. Rain from
the ground up. Slowly north through the zero visibility. Arktos, Thulian
north, pineal discussion I can't quite make out the words. Reassurance of
babble, many particles in motion. What's important is to avoid obsession.
Parcelling out what would be love. Just the train, slowly thrust. Glowing
thing. Sword. Answer.

Desire or repulsion. The thing you can trust. How else could you know a
rock is the sky's greatest fear. The rock caught in your shoe. Threatening so
much more. How else could you know about the line of sunset, as it
retracts, an orange shawl, you have to follow, moving across all you were.
That, more than what anybody says. Is what anybody says.

To obfuscate. Represent a truth. The streets' derivation hides it. Never
exactly clear. Where one stands in the unclarity. Whatever isn't that rock.
To contradict yourself. Be reminded. What else is memory. Two moments
come close. An answer inverts, a Galilean projection into the future. The
sunset keeping pace. Moon at your heels. Thought, spinning the stars
around it.

I don't believe a word. The empty bottle of night. City forms a terrestrial-dome, street-lamps gleaming on the skyward ceiling. Lies. But there are stars, even if you can't see them, singing sky's aria. Far from this act of obsession, this war on night. Far as could be. Terrified you don't know whatever it is you do to them. Trying their best to tell you.

Transformations II

Distant sound of Haitian rumbling far off
right next to me. There are some things too.
Certain dusty articles in the chinatown
of life. Maybe no good to put in your room.

And lose the signal. We don't know until
it happens, or doesn't. Those words
I don't know until I say them.

Excitement of something remembered just as
it comes present. Speak Creole without knowing it.
Whatever language things speak, makes them

foreign enough to be things. Answering some
question we can only divine. Daytime candles in the
window, winking through a window in the candle of the sky.

They took my voice away with all their talking.
Sitting here I need to tell you.

Matter. The way anything is, if you can imagine a
push against it. Alone in your apartment all the

precious stuff of your life I can't help but touch
in my simple way, like a ghost can hope to

move air. Relative matters.

My voice still chattering with the rest of them

down the street. Here is an economy with things
the way you've decorated a careful silence, where one

can linger, like two curtains parted to the ends of
thought. Tzim Tzum. That life-wide silence where all our

noisy matter lives.

The wreckers. Moon cursers luring night's ships in, onto the rocks. What comes to the candles in the living-room. What washes up we get to keep, I thought. 100 candles. The extravagance of plurality. I understood experience until some desire blurred it. So much so that's not even what. Not even it. That I wanted. I don't know what I wanted, but the embarrassing reminder. Fact of all I'd done to avoid it, brought me into its confidences: its clarity a well-worn path going nowhere. The single path of all I'd seen. A single light. When you close your eyes and there is no after image. As if her sad eyes lit there: the love these thousands of years.

Gnostic Evenings

Yet it remains eternal something seen in the awareness of death. We learned to “know better” before we “learned” anything. So the rain calls in the middle of the night— as a relief, not a resolution.

I’m finally writing what I should be as a fourteen year old girl. In bed, the simplified room. Overcome by my body. It’s only me who outlives the composition. That medusa Vinteuil left, or Mahler’s Japanese ghost, in laurels, sandals, harrowing the streets until the symphony’s over. Write to the halting composition of rain.

Crickets, a flood of sound: I met a musicologist on the street; this flood is the city slicker’s plague, a flood you realize *not literally*, what it means to realize anything at all.

The loss of stars of direct communication teaches us other motions: eclipse, elongation, though the stars are out of reach the world bends to these things and night is a matter of what changes from day.

It’s true I’m preoccupied with rigging my guts to the sky, to get wrenched by it! An owl neglected now comes from outside, is that what you are? Shapeshifter?

If it’s hidden it’s worth something. Equal at least to origin. But I don’t know what’s there. Riding the topography of my zeal, intestines swaying in the solar wind of that black one, a glittering forest, as if infinitely cut crystal affording glances, the variegated being of the object in question.

Song VI

I'd like to find one of those places
lateral outpost
of continuous life

where from the corner of your eye
flaps into your house
whatever comes and Here I am.

L'Chaim! It's been garbled
at the end of the night.

How could anyone be born
under the sign of the virgin.

How everyone is, with nothing but will
to make sense by.

The lazy will of being everything, of being "by"
shadow surfacing on the page
or the stranger who kicks you
at the dance, and demands you buy her a drink.

That angry look of Mephistopheles
as if she'd just stormed the fifth dimension
to match your will with her precision.
The part and the whole.

Because she did. An answer
to your willful thrusts at the boundary we name ours.
Who's there?

Wound up Aleph, sign of the kick

banging at the edges of life.

It's an Aries who answers. Or the next one.

The first letter that keeps happening in all the rest.

The Empty Stations

1.

Something already happened here. Remember? It's the first thing you think of what else could we worship. Our memories— It's circuitous to see anything. Even once. The white spider crawling upside down through the air. For as long as I focus. I look beneath the bench (why did I look!) and find one green grape directly below me. The spider is gone. —& memories that aren't even ours.

2.

Smell of soup after midnight from downstairs. Like lovers tramp across the frozen tidal river the tides a cold terror of latent pasts: a dream (but I was going to write demon) ridden primordial soup

warms open. It's summer, barley & rosemary & the green man. Who says the seasons come in order.

It only takes one letter to move from mahyeem to shahmahyeem. Water to Air. Hidden letter that supports the root. To pierce the icy past with summer potage. There is another letter (shaped like a stick), that says if you dig a whole deep in the earth you will find water there.

3.

On last night's train, what I didn't dare say. My notebook in my bag. A bull, foghorn the empty stations. Express. Long smooth stride of underground animal. Unseen bellowing of the inside world. The star passes from its subterranean tracks.

The end. "I feel a sense of closure" you said, asking if that implied a new beginning. Absolutely not I replied rejecting sparing you outright. My male vanity. And because it seemed imperative you know. But mostly this. See the same thing again and it's dead. Or you are. As if post-protean, we could keep asking the same questions.

4.

We decide life. Or recognize death (what I heard was *or* hebrew for Light). Don't recognize anything. Even a sound comes with a color. Unfamiliar beyond source; yet a rare steak, whole tomato, smell of whale oil in an open book: the inside of my eyes, familiar dew glitters across the landscape. *But there is a law of the sun which protects us.*

5.

The fact of men in boats and fish come out to meet them. Sight is the organ of apprehension, just as it is the daughters of helios on that boat, catching not fish but shoals of cloud. The eyes do nearly nothing. The rest is magic.

No need to explain as long as there's response. The wise half of desire. What the sun sees in us. From us. The street yields up its offerings flower planters sandwich bags of sliced mango or cantaloupe it's my business to collect. Even money, whatever catches the eye, for it buys bread. A man walking home with black feathers, oil-slicked green. A reality irritated from the uselessness of invention.

6.

The Hudson in sun-smoothed patches from the Cloisters' balcony. A castle of stolen doors. I could tell a limestone archway with my eyes closed. That peculiar coolness. And beneath the sunspots— perhaps you felt their meaning, the where-to of a form, just before the buzzer, your finger still on the Merode Altarpiece. I was convinced you would trip as we hurried out through the wide chapel its elevated chancel a tripwire as soon as you've seen it. Or even thought of it. Perhaps you did.

7.

I've never had more than guesswork. Aristotle says something: learning is when you cease to know. Catharsis. Representation. It's a lie. The snake continues to navigate the roots of the poet's tree. Immense tree of the stories, of all we've made up.