

Rhymes in reason
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Twenty poems

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LetternetPress/AnOpenDrawerPublication

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A Prologue

Well I love you, well I do
Till at last, "oh well...", adieu
Parting lips, a phrase or two
Many things take me from you

Time might skip and leap right here
Many echoes spring to ear
Things we whisper, things we fear
Making hearers oh so near

Lips to lips, our lips askew
Breathing in your breath I knew
Tear-strained voices told me who
Are the voices dear to you...

The Coupled Breadth

Just as before I was called to face you
Now it is I who call you forth to face

How the coupled breadth of your lips encompasses,
Although the heart that beats for you in fiery pride sows,

A breath whose hushed tones break each girded, circling
Compass leading to that very breast; how a heaving breath

Then thrusts its own eerie parting of the voice
Into the currency of this world, a numbing noon-day

Of adjectives that you flay, carried to the breach
Of an impenetrable redness still raining,
Of birds tearing at air, of your lips left straining.

“I love your cunt”

“I love your cunt;” words spoken in a bold voice,
the bold voice of lips pulling at lips, “two lips
to lips pressed and pressing,” lips voicing like blood
filling lips, murmuring in deep folded tongues...

“I love your cunt;” lips pressed against lips, your lips
askew as fingers brush aside a rose laced with rose
fingers twining: I know you as living flame,
I know the tips of your breasts graze the surface

of your dreaming, burning like words stung, stinging,
I love when you kiss me drunk on your pleasure,
I love your asshole, I want to make it sing...

Who speaks?

Who speaks? An ear beckons and I can but be near,
A sacred act, that second act is denial
at once as savage as any matter swirling

unstruck, untouched by so much sharing voice: here, there,
undoing, undone, a heart's horizon's master
stands even nearer, the kinder gates collapse

in voice as voices finally go, voicing a wish—
That heart's an even match, a mettlesome master
to my own and sets a gentle hand to tapping...

Before it's wished for: so much unexpressed breathless
strangeness sidles along to trouble me: an ear
beckons and I can but be near who speaks for you.

Something of time

This shame which weighs my limbs
not so heavy as immobile
a thrust of flesh, a flat horizon
unstable time's laugh leaps ignoble

Something of time is dead between us
as laughing time erupts, the scene
is easy as a heart a-beating
some walls to keep apart our bleeding

Our hours

Hours, our families, knotted in time and passing
to us this bread, stand before me: consternation
and force grip desire, and that alone is lasting.

Just as with time, that which grips one and is motion
clutches at another and is a stage, flaying
taste or the retort of tasting: consummation,

scarred as it can only be, and never lasting.
Hours, families of desire and knots of motion,
a lost communion in the midst of such slaying

as you stand before me, echo of desiring.
How can the image stand its appropriation?
How can the image stand when it alone is Zion?

I've watched you always

I've watched you always from afar, from afar,
the distant smith of a father, from afar;
such has always been the kindred
that would echo a furtive fatal act.

So far, so far the time has screened demand:
seeing it has meant that we are the less
for believing it, each form always more
than it seems. The hallways fall again, shaped,

fitted, the mad relentless weave of voices
weaned from your soul as you stumble to stand
mean less: they lean against a wall of death,
the rasp of a whorling whirling gaze.

I've watched you always from afar, from afar,
the silent gaze of a father, from afar;
such and such has always been the fact
would echo a fatal fertile act.

If wrong unwrong me

If wrong unwrong me, I know not how to tell
besides, before me, a past ripe to swell
into my hand, see, into my heart, that knell
which death deems the most one can impel:
fiendish pen so free the pen's bonds so subtle.

A loosened strap

“I’m slowly dying.” Words spoken, love undone.
A loosened strap, life’s own hollowing call crushed
into its nothingness; the wind whips, winding

white sheets on a line: small part of your dying.
A part of you buried, unable to mourn
even a smaller part of you dying, sends

another, a crudely sutured cadaver,
entrails spilling, to mouth the self’s hollow rhythm
at me, baiting me until I’m bleeding and numb.

Our lives are hopelessly entangled

Our lives are hopelessly entangled in what has ravaged us,
woven together face to bitter face no one challenges us,
at least not like we are, strangers: the same face registers
mistrust, even disgust. But what is there to soil, and how often
can it lie to us? Why do I ache so? A cruel turn, being equal
I can't forgive you, not even for what you hold against me.

A gift, standing

for the things one tends to mislay,
that even as they fall, scattering, are
an inbred wound, funds for a gleaning rage

of mistrust, misery as it turns, waiting,
wound, incorporate. The semblancings
of desire and of despair, whose secrecies

I could not foresee, even the grace
and poignancy of one's own mind,
as once it is known it will always be lost,

over and over; *these things*, "I swell
and I am lost," or "I swell
and I am bound;" *these things*, spilling

into a hushed hysteric voice, shed, hidden
deep in a filial excess of darkness,
or drawn in a derisive circle of light;

these things, like the incensed murmuring,
the quivering, folded echo traced
in the clatter of heels on a close, wet street;

these things, like the harp that plays,
yes, yes, over and over, tugging
at your thighs, spilling you into the night;

these, like drops, thrashing the pool
of a darkened, chastened sky, where another,
a blooming Narcissus, seeing only

the deriding character of that water,
tears his face away, and standing, turns
towards that which is its own threshold

Eventail

Two dreams of mourning dreamt side by side,
two dreams of loss lived time after time;
Such are the rules which barter for us,
bargaining away their substance as us...

Stains, illusions, dreams; once again
parts of us, flakes flickering across us
like ash tossed flush from us, tossed
from that furnace which founds us, ravaging
and consuming us: that heart a heated abyss
turning us around and around, great swirling
beating wings of heated flesh scattering
smoldering shadows like smoke stoked and whipped,
smoke crowding close about us, tiger striped
and streaked by some oblique black emptiness:

*Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles
et des branches, et voici mon coeur, qui ne bat que...*

What the whore hisses
as the couple passes

Just as nipples glisten, stabbed wet by kisses
And pluck'd breaths toss lost causes
Cross sighs, cries, and huddled moans
A tussled speech grips and sways
And all that can unfold, unfolds
In a saccharin, sibylline scar of sky
So unsure, so unstable
That chance itself is a sudden shambles
Of shadows, constant strangers that cling
Like death in the edenless dark

The secret grave

Here, too tired to slyly rhyme a reason's resonance
to itself, a feign, a sleight lost by the deftest of hands
I hear a refrain: always lost, never to be found again

Something unfeeling will fall in a parched and barren land
an horizon's emptiness I can neither head nor ignore
I hear a chorus: something buried I can never mourn

A dry grave is dug deep in dank loam and sand
the world that holds hollow holds forth for each hand
I hear a refrain: always lost, never to be found again

Oh these hands are tired, these eyes bow low
as sleep holds nothing the dream cannot unfold
I hear a chorus: something buried I can never mourn

So much death the silent quake that opens the land
that rends the veil, shatters the stone and breaks the bread
I hear a refrain: always lost, never to be found again

Our world the purely verbal, the gap the veil and shroud
the word a trickling terror with which each shape is sown
I hear a chorus: something buried I can never mourn

Lifeless, so death cannot erase, each is in the other's place
and straining to hear a lurid voice, to glimpse an unbounding face
I hear a refrain: always lost, never to be found again

Introibo

So it is that a stolid stoic moon rises over every grimace
of a lost yet lasting pleasure, a grammar lost in clouds
of perfume, a dizzying swirling drunkenness of lips etching

circles round yet another darkened globe, and he too always
wearing that same savage face even when chased and chastened
by a strange clinging gravity, that other wanderer of flesh.

How do strangers act when strangers are together?
Are gazes lost, tossed into moon-lit pools, seeing neither
reflection nor reflected but only those farther fallen shores?..

Folds so dark and warm and wet, folds where each is held
enthralled in the other's arms, touched so by shocks
of electric-like ripples sparkling like eyes falling upon them...

And how do strangers act when strangers are far apart?
Are there still clouds that cling, stars that tilt and swirl,
shifting across a black unfolding gate of sky flooded

with eyes that see only who alone is the other's night?
So furtive as never to be captured in any unfolding fate, but
unfolding only in grimaces sighing, shining, disappearing...

Is there passion enough for passion ever to be denied?
Is there passion enough if only passion can finally reign?
Is there passion enough when, like those reflections cast,

consciousness itself clings like a cloud of perfume and
every last edifice of clinging consciousness will collapse,
finally collapse into a dreamless sleep that knows no end?

Is there passion enough when we are ruled by such moments'
accidents? Is there passion enough to grasp that, set aflame
in our shifting terms and grammars, we breathe such confusion?

Is there passion enough to glimpse how both face and fate fade
until like the crisp black night they appear, standing stark still
in the presence of that invisible One in whose gaze we find sight?

Vespro della beata virgine

This body is desire's own sign, my hot breath breathing,
my lips brushing against your thigh
as slippery wet nipples that stiffen in the gleam
of a blood that races in throbs
return the presence of that swelling chorus of touch.

Look, see soft lips find your body so swollen with signs,
find that tuft of hair containing
a cloying perfume which as it spills fills my nostrils
and clings lingering on my tongue.

Look, feel lips seek lips so blood swollen with wet kisses,
feel labial lips so engorged,
soft lips surrounded by tangled tresses surrendered,
matted in raw mucousy accords.

I find such jewels in this fierce wilderness of sense;
lapis eyes under liling lids,
the darkest sapphire of an asshole slyly hidden,
a clit adamant as diamond
on a sparkling, dewy field of wet velvet wrapping,
unwrapping its slick glistening
throb that I stroke with my deftest brush of sensation,
my thick probing fingers dipping
into the soft sopping palette of your dripping pussy,
as again they paint your hard knob.

Rows upon rows of fleshy arrows across my skin
arouse me straining stiff and hard
as a stare, balls hanging heavy like ripened fruit,
liquor ready to splash burning
onto lips, such slow sleep mingled seed dream fermented
until something snaps at the base
of my spine and you can paint my chest with spurts of cum.

I linger above such a shifting scene that changing,
dissolves in the firm grasp of my hands
and reforms like some molecular fire through my legs,
under my arms, around my back,
as wrapping your hands around my neck you pull me down
into the burning, whirling lick
and I find you, a lost word on the tip of my tongue,
immaculate as the word of some god.

A little song

I'll make up a little song, both good and bad,
Without knowing about what or who, nor even how or why;
I don't even know what I have in mind,
But I'll make it up anyway since I don't know how to,
And whoever is incapable of singing can sing it.

I feel ill, though there never was any man
Healthier than I, and I take the best of men for the worst;
I give generously since I have nothing to give
And I only want the worst for whoever wants the best for me.
I am, without loving, a lover so sincere
That whoever wants to win me loses me forever.

I chase after the one who doesn't call out to me,
And it's to her that I direct my desire since she has nothing for me.
I only know how to do that which suits me:
I get up when I should go to bed and I sing when I should cry.

Around me, all about me *Insanity* encircles me,
And that's how I know more about it than anymore.
I turn everything around ass-backwards in the saddle
Since I've forced myself to learn such good sense
That it makes me do crazy things.

I've been a lover for some time now,
Enjoying neither treachery nor betrayal. So full of pride
I've called down mercy for others as if for myself,
Since I'm looking to be done with it against my own liking
And I'm seeking just what I don't want to be given.

I know this woman, but I don't want her to call out to me
Nor if she does me wrong to forgive me for it;
If she wanted it I would nearly swear by my faith
That I would make her beg me to fuck her,
But one shouldn't show off so scornfully!

If she's kind to me, I know well enough to find
A pretext, in return, to get her to renounce the service of love;
Just as by achieving what they want
The malicious think to elevate and to glorify themselves
The more by demeaning themselves.

I have no idea about what I've made my little song,
I wouldn't know even if someone else explained it to me;
I possess such a crazy knowledge
That I know absolutely nothing about myself.
The knowledge that someone doesn't want me
Has caused me to lose what was my mind.

I think I speak in a rather discrete manner
But I must say things that make you look at me askance.
There is a woman who could return my good senses to me
If only she would condescend to grant me her love.

contemporary version of
a 12th century song by
Giraut de Bornelh

L'amore vincitore

Who is this child who mocks me so basely?
Laughing amidst the dizzying whisper of flesh
Leading me to a kind of sweet stinging sickness
As I twist and turn, cramping inside of my skin
Like some displaced Chuchulain of the kisses
Where each kiss is nothing more nor less
Than some living death and decay hopelessly suspended
Before darker dying death's final victory

So there can be no hope, there can be no fear
Just a swift, stark and brutalizing real
Seen in the whetted grace and gravity of a naked shoulder
Arching, flexing, and bending, veiled by the hollow light reflected
In the glint, the glimmer, the gleam of a gloating child's glare
For love is that child who playing behaves like a child
The disorder it spins the only proof of its having been
As I fall into the loss and loneliness that fills me

After Li Po, Following a Flood

I see other vagabonds in the night.
They clutch their fears tightly to themselves
like valuable objects, and wander on about their ways.

My own little boat has been tossed about.
Its sail is torn and ragged, though its mast is still standing.
Through with the sea, I head for the mouth of a river.

I can see how bright gardens of water have marked the land.
Everything has slipped away like some lost article of clothing,
or a forgotten name that seems once to have been ours.

My mind is like a lantern slowly turning
around and around, casting shadows
which freeze for an instant, and then vanish.

Banished, in exile, I am the unwelcome guest of every horizon.
The moon wanders above me, a friend crossing my path again.
I fear I have so far to go, so many oar-strokes remaining.

The War of the Flowers

January

The Palace of the Ages
Will crumble and fall,
And where will we be
With all of our clumsy goodbyes?..

carnation

February

Dewy-lick'd treasures
On our lips and tongues,
A splash of lips onto lips
As two lips finally explode...

tulip

March

There is such movement everywhere,
The trembling, boundless Ages dispelled.
All blossoms will wither and fade,
Like cracks in the world announcing...

rose

April

There is a blossom born of gravity and time
that only the rhythm of light can claim,
A flowering landscape that heaves and flows
like a missing song *au bout des levres...*

lily

May

I can remember breathing
that rose with every heartbeat
In the light of a blue, blue iris
like the open vault of a blue, blue sky...

iris

June

Flowers kiss you full of such sweet sadness
In the burning house of the past
Which begins by surrounding us in the present
And lingers like a smoke-filled nose to the end

lilac

July

Lightly stroking, feel your skin spinning
A sweaty slick shiver like slivers of light
Flashing in waves as you crash.
How is it you can stand so much pleasure?

dandelion

August

Skin against skin, soft fingers whisking,
I touched you lightly as you slept.
There are clouds drifting somewhere
Over an empty field...

wild thistle

September

I love to discover you with my fingers
Slapped by every tender blossom of nerve
A needlesome nettles handful of promise
As velvet as petals slipping away...

daisy

October

“At nightfall, when the cold winds come,
A confusion of crowded blossoms falls...”

—Po Chü-i

Blossoms fall softly tumbling autumn
As death deftly unravels its hues and ties;
A few precious moments spent in chains,
Glistening chains of sudden savage surprise...

violet

November

Explosions of thought, the crickets bloom,
The night falls across arched bowers;
The horizon aches, a breadth or two
The world is lost in its shower...

chrysanthemum

December

Crystal clear crystals crack
Always along their flaws,
And petals fall singing loudly
The mute speech of bodies in space...

pansy

