

TOWARD A TERMINAL ZONE

by

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ABSTRACT

Now I have the opportunity to write the grand preface, I find I have too much to say, and so, again, it's easier to want to say nothing. The poems here want to give some pleasure, to anyone who cares to take it from them. The poems to come, the terminal zone itself, what I have been moving toward and into, in both poetry and painting, will not give pleasure. But here, for the moment, are some of the notes recorded on the way. They have involved that kind of feeling-in-sleep one experiences when one must rehearse old voices, surrounding voices, unheard voices, in order to find from the many sounds around us that one strong enough to sing.

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BLEW OINTMENT

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DELTA

EL CORNO EMPLUMADO

PRISM INTERNATIONAL

TO EVERY THING THERE IS A SEASON

LE CONSEIL DES ARTS DE QUEBEC

THE CANADA COUNCIL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	1
CONSPIRACY	2
THE JAPANESE GARDENS	3
THE REVELATION	5
AN ESKIMO LINE	6
AN ALLEGORY OF LOVE	7
THE PRISONER DEVoured BY LICE	8
FOR ESTHER	12
TO WILL IS TO STIR UP PARADOX	17
IMAGE OF CHOICE	24
A SUBJECT IS ANY	25
"AND MANY ARE THE DEAD MEN	26
FOR MARC, WHO	27
RAINBOW FLAME	28
LUNAR SEQUENCE 1	29
LUNAR SEQUENCE 2	30
LUNAR SEQUENCE 3	31
WHAT IT IS	32
FOR RICK & ANNE	33
ORPHEUS, WITH SEASHELLS	34

BOTTICELLI'S BIRDS & FLOWERS	35
AN ACCIDENT IS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE	36
THE BARBER	37
CABLEVISION	38
STILL WATER & FISH	39
LEONARD'S SECRET	40
EPITHALAMIUM	41
BALLAD OF THE DEPARTING HUSBAND	42
SUSAN: REMEMBERING/FORGETTING	43
FOR SUSAN, FOR POETRY	44
AND ALL THESE THINGS ARE TRUE	45
NIGHT WALK	46
ALPHA —	47
APT. 4B	48
THE IMAGE	49
TAPE 18B	51
12/12/70	52
THE SILVER CIRCLE	53
TERMINAL ZONE	55
VANCOUVER VORTEX (FIRST MOVEMENT)	59

TITLE

these trees let
no light through: you
within, looking,
cast the shadow I
walk through, no
surprise in your
eyes

CONSPIRACY

we use my fear of losing you
to legislate the loss:

if the bed is naked & the killing
done

no kisses for the corpse
whichever one

THE JAPANESE GARDENS

the garden

the architect knew the weather would
 tips touching
 edges
 their colors echo
 scales of delight the wind derives
 in the sky, also
 off the pond the waterfall ringing
 place where peace is!
 il faut savoir que tout rime
 & they never learned to steer
 praised the devils of death & dragons
 such as
 papillon hirondelle amour

2

the garden

laced with leaves winter placed
 has,
 overlapping the
 the earth & rocks
 the center of the search for
 soul, the branches & boughs that are
 the scales of the fish, the waves
 unimagined weightlessness . . .

sd wols from his beach at cassis
 the asiatics are warring people
 scorned water
 unsuitable questions
 or the butterfly me?

3

the garden

on the ground with a care
one near one so:
brown to gold

drives from
on the scales of the rock
where each to each the spaces ring!
not peace
their boats, they knew powder & fire
& often asked
was it I
dreamed the butterfly?

the great winds rage
to the hollow caves
of earth

THE REVELATION

on the screen fly the trees of fish/
their shadows drift
into light
& form the feet of those

who would not miss them:
a slide, a drift
into lights & darks that are
flight
fish
the woman kneeling

before her mirror:
these
no less than
anna blume/for she blooms
relentlessly
as the dada voice intones
another dimension
of things which are
infinity
cosmos
light.

there is a season
unlike a photograph
or a slide
that glides
before the eyes of the country awaiting
its own damnation.

o let the shadows move into the light:
the sky shall bleed no longer/for
the things we see
are the things we are.

o let the true trees bloom: the sky
is a science of eyes.

AN ESKIMO LINE

I could not sleep
for the sea lay so smooth
near at hand

as she, beside me in the yellow bed,
turned to the sea in her dream
with a motion to up/set me
who only wanted sleep
without dreams filled with fish
swimming
beneath boats
filled with fishermen
harpoons & anchors)

can it be
the hunter only dreamt he killed
the walrus, the blood on the sea
surface, the angry flippers & hunting
float?

can it be her dream, lit like the lascaux
caves or the sea on a clear day, contained
like the float, a guardian amulet (secret
of transparencies?

(a friend who lived with the eskimo
was on the ice one day & found
his lamp & heater faulty: far
from any dwelling & without complaint
he kept to his journey. as the clear
ice surrounded him
he cast
no shadow

AN ALLEGORY OF LOVE

let me disguise you. in my fingers there is the power
of the lie. the ballerina relies on the power in my
hands, the politician, the dry-cleaner, the registrar.
the war in vietnam is also a result of the paint
flowing from my fingers. when i walked into the
jeweller's & asked if he needed a first-rate embellisher,
he sd sure, step in back boy, & let's see what you can
do. he handed me a turnip. i made it into a communist
star, a nose-ring for sniffing flowers. make me a
bracelet, boy, he ordered, while smiling & sniffing the
air. i took a thumb tack, stuck it in his eye, walked
out & didn't look back.

THE PRISONER DEVoured BY LICE

who was
 once in the ranks of the figures
 (to prevent the penetrations of stones)
 & missing that sight of you
 as the street stopped
 I saw

the prisoner of the camp
 you were before
 the child dwarfed
 the image
 the man became.

you couldn't see
 the eyes of the image
 that made you
 in my eyes become
 what you never
 were.

2

uncertain the reason you
 should appear/at this
 the moment the child
 wakes

not the noise of the fugue
 not the noise
 alone in a dark room
 the child remembers not
 the name

but the figure
 of the prisoner devoured
 by lice:
 Auschwitz (awakens no
 memory)

but the figure, there
 somewhere he cannot see
 him, stands still
 within
 the frame of the photograph.

the reason when abandoned
 the toy becomes
 the image of the killer.

he must be here
 there
 if you know
 where I don't
 know
 the place
 of which I speak.

still.
 he cannot be in the half-awake
 cry of the child
 nor in the stillness
 of the cobblestones.

various voices contend
 one of which you
 or the child
 is.

3/expectations

the beasts arrive
 through doors the fortune's
 ear, attended
 attending/the stones must
 turn, for love or
 fire.

"eye & ears of the great
 king waiting"

accident the sign for the racing sirens
 red lights blink in the blaze of the air
 faces turn, the figure descends
 the circular stairs.

"or the shape, then, of color & restlessness"

"cet oubli du reve apres le sommeil
 (this dream of love I awake in
 n'est pas plus extraordinaire que
 being at all times present
 ce qui a lieu dans l'etat de veille
 can enter at any point
 ou l'on ne se rappelle pas a la fin
 the language making
 de la journee la centieme partie des pensees
 the real reference)
 qui s'y sont produites"

[les reves,
 hervey de saint
 denys]

yr figure framed in the window of the store
 delivers the corpse
 covered by thinnest snow
 to the stones turning
 in the tides on the shore

& the child crying
 from the roof of the room
 to the toys aligned by the farthest wall
 encounters the prisoner
 devoured by lice

as the beasts attend
 at the door
 faces raised
 police lights piercing.

4

(a statement: inevitable surrender of the intellect becomes the invisible connective, measure of things to come. for we walked away then, unaware that a year later the memory of you could ever be a source of confusion. the 3 voices by which I hoped to reach you: all false)

FOR ESTHER

the probes a portfolio of prisons necessary to renew the pain that gives direction. it's true, there's no outer & inner, of space or form: a peace, not beyond, or within, but consuming. the tree is not on space but in space. there is something larger & still no distance from it or to it to be travelled. so her face against the wall is not yet hers, gives way to faces too large & familiar for us to notice the pale form balancing on the edge of space, its direction subject to the whims of a madman's breath. (a moon must harvest & hunt.)

the hospital itself is like a disease, proud enough to be contagious. she had seen its tower in films, in the eyes of poets & petty officials, on the walls of the forgotten city. the walls are mirrors revealing films. they play in slow motion to the speed of our eyes, silent. the day she asked him, if you don't believe me, who will, he turned to the wall where her mirror seemed to be, & the tower beyond it began to topple,

the many forms of the movie to melt. we tried to dress her in white, make her into the bed, but she jumped from the window. the doctor's smile had flowers in it that spoke greek. the nurse knew nothing yet.

2

someone told her never to bow to nature. the dog understood everyone. the car was stolen, the flag lowered from the totem, the dog pissed on the grass. a yellow streak appeared in the blue sea below the cliff. when a boundary changes its shapes both sides move together. the totem began to reveal its forms.

two motorcycles, both black, side by side on the partly yellow prairie, both covered by the same transparent plastic. they were going to south america via new york & mexico, they sd. the moon rose as if from blood & the northern lights played phoenix.

3

as the stone is circled with white the night is. we are

permitted disguises & blessed for being fools. the paradox is real. the skill of the undivided stems from this: there is nothing to be established.

the night she came with her dog & her pregnancy, all of us dazed with sleep or the lack of it: our dreams interchanged, the highways crossed & fused, the landscape around us new & unexpected. the high beams made shadows larger than ourselves. like her we became hitchhikers, moved into the bewildering maze of freeways & exits, lights flashing on & off the demanding signs that led into the cities across the continent. america europe north africa all the dreams they expected to live they had already lived: dreams in which each word exploded viciously: the dum-dum bullet tearing flesh finds cells & glands invisible to the scalpel that follows, compounding damage. at death their dreams are studded with shrapnel & knives: the hospital donates them to victory square & the lonely drifters.

4

the desperate dancing: pale image of the rose decaying
in harsh overhead night light at dawn. all things emerge/
in the terror of changes. the contour at last defining
the impossible monument, the unbearable contact. pitiless
walls betraying their builders: sad architect, sage
architect, tenants confused at the end of the month.
insatiable mystics pursuing stones. newsie helpless in
his lack of cunning to account for the missing dimes.
the professor saying you can't change the world. the
radio accounts for the missing killers. they left a note
saying the world can't change the professor. he's in
the bathroom with the radio looking for the dial. this
useless & pointless knowledge: there's nothing to steal
that doesn't belong to you, nothing to give that is yours.
the totem is a motorcycle twisted in the tree.

to protect themselves from the enormous drain of energy)
the radio cannot rape everyone but rapes all it can.
eventually the softness of the machine may find us, &

murmur over & over into our ears the latest scores as we squirm. the mouth consuming the skull to form enormous words, lips large as twin jelly fish, the words blurred with a speed of intention the lips cannot match. a naked electric throat threatening (the victims sacrifice one another in advance

5
a dark presence shadows them, limnd with fire: a dark cushion of comfort: a certain strength is taken from that empty space to make it a changing shape. do they realize where their integrity lies. they seem to have made a journey through the city of night. perhaps they stand at the outskirts, behind them the holocaust of lights, & face the vague surreal plain seeming to end at the horizon, the space between them a liquid shape with all of the colors of the city in it. somehow they do not know where they are, as if the dancing horizon ends in their fingers, & the sensation of holding everything they have ever had makes them uncomfortable. a telescope could place them, a pincer of light, perhaps even one of the search beams that continuously circle the city at night: but the light never descends far enough to show their bodies are knit by the dancing shape between them.

TO WILL IS TO STIR UP PARADOX

1 the bridge

to be a craftsman
even on this bridge
which if I walk in one direction
moves in the other
is the naked
skill of suicide.

the boats, tethered to the water
barely move with the waves
whereas the masts
sway in the wind
& slowly
the tide moves in.

the birds are floating
below the bridge
on air, on water
the darkness makes
them one.

the sun
a neon sign
is the new
hieroglyph/the one
sacred, hard
to understand:
at night it burns
naked & red, as around it
turn
the galaxies of
the dead.

2 circles

the whole naked & vast
flower
of the tree stands still
as my eyes
move.

beyond the rim the fortress speaks
to the bird of night from whose wings
fall the seeds of the flower.
(as one will / as one can)

winters in their turn
are the nights of seasons
lit with the signs
of linear streets
(reading Maximus
from Dogtown
I am at a loss

lost too
in other excavations
I can only see
the streetlights curving
above the chasms.

action grows
between memory & desire
 between the root
 & the branch
the living
fire.

the bridges in the city are the lines
& the lines the echoes of fictional feet
are feet, the cat's paw gliding
the breath
returning.

there is an order:
 over the sea, whether east
 or west
 over the land, north
 or south
 the 1st command, the 1st city
 calls me / to obey.

carver of argilite
 the hands of yr body
 argus-eyed
 hunt in the forest
 the stone totem
 hunt in the tree stone
 the black of the forest
 the black of the night.

the camera turns
 to the grandfather waiting
 the boy's return from the coastal shore.

naum gabo wrote: I do not experience
 any of the fear
 of the dark forces in
 nature
 primitive man
 saw & experienced.

/the tide revealed
 the block of wood
 aerated by worms,
 where their bodies formed
 the cells of their city
 their locus in
 the sequence of line/

sculptors of darkness the city fears
 the lights of the city in my belly are
 smashed/fire
 in the water is
 splintered, les nenuphars
 dark in closing are
 broken on
 altars in the night
 in the silence.

3

the birth that beauty brings to grief:
strange city, strange time, pride
in the strangeness, uncertain
understandings:

every baby born a bastard
in the metro.

personal history the strangeness I carry
or the stranger who harbours me,
carried through
the silent unmoving tunnels.

where in the metro did I see you falling?
on the steps that spiralled out of sight.

/the monarchs sailing in the air are true
& the birds in the darkness flying/
somewhere in the metro climbing
the stairs, heavily,
as if you had
a rock in yr belly
you fell
sat.

people walked around you without looking
or looking quickly looked away. a woman
with a dog & some flowers came to you,
smiled faintly.
perhaps she thought you were dying
une femme enceinte
I should have kissed you.

the order of blood in the light of
the lamp:
you gave birth, then,
it was written
on the mesh of the cages
of the birds in the dream (the dream
yet to be dreamed

4 voyage/prefigurations of the command

"dogs of blood — flower empty"
 all this the north of the eastern land
 (no syntax in the trees)
 let now the angels of the ailing land
 call forth the demons of the sea.

confess the swiftness of the turning earth
 with fingers numb before the day
 with pain
 & words that lie:
 neither glorify
 nor reduce the glory of.

precision:

open to the darkness of the stars
 to the ocean where
 the three-legged king
 stands in the tide-water
 above the floating hair
 of the woman.

incision:

in the rocks & the stones
 of the cove
 forms of the king carved by waves
 tombs, fingers,
 skeletons from heaven.

decision:

to know the stones & the rocks
 cannot deny
 the blood of the stars floating
 in the rock pool.

rock pool.

moon
 island
 song

5 the terror of changes

stone cut/stone cutter/what shall it be
 birds or graves?
 o cut stone/cutter of stone
 that choice is not yours to make
 even though
 black is the beauty of the brightest day
 even as)

susan/where art thou?
 not somewhere but here, the wind
 in the cedars;
 o ruth, not here but somewhere
 the rain a silver gauze against the grey
 hills & valleys

were you not there
 the long night waiting, the long
 night raining
 cythera

put away the notes you have stored/they serve
 no longer: put away
 those hatreds & jealousies/you
 who must believe/must
 also love

the birds of night & day white
 or black/chickens & pigeons/must
 mix
 & reverse
 colors

with

within the cage of the 4 locations
 given me
 woven & the one
 metamorphosis
 of worm to bird/bright orange/a fire
 of darkness/its eyes
 the boat arrives, only its lights
 signify
 the luxurious beast
 it is (how
 many times has it come & gone
 how long its movements in

the channel between
 the islands/moving further
 up the coast

 the channel, the deft
 weaving
 the difficult
 passage, the grey mist confuses
 the morning with the night, bewilders
 the islands
 invisible

shadow-islands emerge

paaawwwmmm paawwmm paaawwwmmm

the waters break, the bones
 having worked in the weeks before

take now
 this heat/take
 now this light

(the soul emerges from the waters as if all dead
 red striations, monster
 monstrous form

about its neck the ring of day

IMAGE OF CHOICE

(moon island song

distance between the eyes
 flesh inside flesh the dream
 of the figures they were, the mesh
 of cages a grid of light in winter
 in night
 a chain of caves, o jardin
 sous la neige

garden
 beneath the snow
 nightmare america
 eagles feathers painted
 white with blood
 borders of neon flash
 a letter home
 home where I was
 caged no longer by islands of night
 islands of light
 moon wind dazzling the ancient eyes
 captain vancouver
 meets mack the knife
 is heroed

is herod
 is king

is eater of flesh
 is liquid city sucking souls
 is killer
 of america
 indian hunter for sport
 lines up targets
 against the wall

is black maria believing god
 in jello

A SUBJECT IS ANY

a subject is any
thing
a garden green

the wife you know
is a big black bird
some unfamiliar word
like octareen
you'll never know
the meaning of
like whisker (or love

a subject is a big black place
wide enough for the human race
& all the women you want to screw
an umbrella that lets in rain
a pleasure
without a pain

a subject then is anything
beautiful enough
to be impossible
or true enough
to be both

a subject is a big black garden
where the spiders conspire a queen
whose pleasures seem forbidden
but for those who dream

of roses in the garden, of frogs, & bank

accounts

of apples, teapots, rabbits
or shadows white & green
or a silver riding horse
beneath a silver moon

or anything else you'd care to see
in the cobwebs of your room

"AND MANY ARE THE DEAD MEN

too silent to be real"
& large is the silence that surrounds
the bleached column of skulls
that marks unseen the living
untongued by desire for death
skull upon skull
eyeless tongueless noseless earless
hollowed of flesh by the preying birds
starved by napalm in montreal streets
they wait for your desire to confess:
many are the dead men silenced by love
building a city with their bones in the earth
knuckles to nucleus spines into spires
their marrow commands a city's belief/

FOR MARC, WHO

damn near died:
 you think of that
 afterwards
 whereas at first
 seeing the red mark around his neck
 your body freezes
 with exploded thought, the mind
 with exploded blood

& after the first
 impulse to kill
 is over

questions no one
 can answer, not even
 facts
 or details
 or motives

beyond those
 the imagination
 supplies too easily

seeing your son
 strung from the rope
 as a monumental sign
 in a poem you wrote
 long ago —

a sign the suffering is everywhere
 even in the mind of the child
 who forgot
 he put a rope
 around the neck
 of your son

RAINBOW FLAME

the gasoline soul in arcs of flame!
the pool of fire! the sky of blood!
the old man burning! the city lit
with the smell of flesh! the city raw
with mud & glass! feathers & shit!
miracles & madness in the rising fire!

LUNAR SEQUENCE 1

da vinci has it
 in a drawing the man extended
 feet & fingers to the edge
 at times like teeth in an open mouth.

that man is trapped
 circles himself
 a small child shaping angels
 in snow

what passes through his navel is the compass point
 what moves him is the knowledge
 he must move

his wings
 carved out from snow
 lying on his back
 or face down
 trace dimensions one side of him
 will never know

da vinci smiles
 his man looks back at him from eyes
 just drawn & somewhat
 defiant confused/facing god
 knows what

doing cartwheels like that
 any minute
 he might ex-
 plode & expire
 a firecracker spinning
 over the bay

what moves him
 muscles in arms & legs
 he discovers he has many
 he moves & they measure
 da vinci smiles again
 a circle
 each one thinking
 he did it
 by himself.

LUNAR SEQUENCE 2

these places are marked/fixed with seals
carved. burned. poured. spoken. screwed.
faceless & divine/beware the man who bears no sign.

LUNAR SEQUENCE 3

"Let us look closely
 at this shadow
 by doing so
 we shall divine
 the attitude
 of the body
 which projects it."
 - Henri Bergson

auvers sur oise / toward the birds & worms
 the graves of the good brothers
 surrounded by regrets
 & faded photographs

cohen cawing his mind
 also maddened

crow memories

passed by the impossible gates
 "with a taste for storms
 & none for shelter"

the crows picked out in the sky
 the black peaks of a black river

shiny

luminous with rot

condemned to fly

WHAT IT IS

stars
screaming as they fall
the clouded moon making
winks at night
& galaxies playing
an astronomical hide & seek

change nothing/do not
make cars, jets, rockets
or even money / they
"are as they are"

& yet the stars are targets &
the whole cosmos

a
praying finger

that forgets
continuously

what it
is

FOR RICK & ANNE

it is a cloak. & of many colors
i am wary / "of Angells
who understand
without discourse"

-Louis Richeome,
The Pilgrime of Loreto,
trans. "E.W." (Paris, 1629)

who is she/she who is
behind me
like a wave. a stone.
a lonesome child.

the lights of the diver
smile from the water
smile from the music
& later i decide

to go outside
to find
the friends over
the bridges as far
as they
go:

the city is a cloak
the color of smoke
the city cannot be
as clear as the sea

ORPHEUS, WITH SEASHELLS

orpheus/captive of the shell
she is rising from the sea
i think she will capture me

orpheus/captain of the cargo
she sleeps between us now
while the organ-grinder plays
section forty-three

her formal hands are folding
the bedsheet back for us
a crimson shell is floating
but the music seems enough

if you see her eyes are tempting
our visions back again
tell her we are sailing
to our visions of her then

BOTTICELLI'S BIRDS & FLOWERS

botticelli's birds & flowers
birth & dance
attend her as she passes
hidden in a trance

her black hair spreads behind her
like a black rainbow fan
as yellow birds & flowers
are born from her hands

never ask her lovers
why the silver winds must blow
never ask the river
why her footprints show

like the fossils of a seashell
in silver ice & snow
like answers to a question
no one can know

AN ACCIDENT IS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE

funny
i could see the glass flying
like water spun
from a girl's hair
as she rises
from the ocean

if only she were there
instead
the old man slumped
as if dead

perhaps he heard
the national anthem sung
by mermaids
with military drums —
a final roll
of batons & bodies

there was no firing squad
only two smashed cars
& two men rising
for air

THE BARBER

concerned not only with
umpires &
holes in space

but also with
lilacs budding
& other
magical
fornications

& still more
with the abstract
principle of
manu-
facturing hair

the encyclopaedic
barber / his
voice a
lather
on your
ears

tells of incest
& the evil
machinations
of a brother whose

dreams he slit
with a razor gleaming
in the moon
light

CABLEVISION

the tv makes a noise of monkeys
 i cannot think or even want
 the flesh of you in my hands
 when noise, pictures
 crowd our bodies
 into grained pieces
 of light

& revolution is a dream
 stanley says so
 hates levertov
 & scorns ideas
 beyond pastrami
 money & land
 & hates the love that makes
 a poem

though he doesn't say so —
 the poet's propaganda
 for poetry

is propoganda
 (american style)
 & dogma back
 wards
 doesn't say
 he's god
 though he says so

& again
 aesthetic action
 is denied
 by those
 "who protest too much"

stanley, don't forget
 we pray for yr father
 his feet
 echoing ours
 in subways.

& even yours.

STILL WATER & FISH

mouth full of snow, where
as with gauguin, will you go
to see again this woman offered
on the half shell as in botticelli

or see the circle traced
on still water by fish
transparent in the snow covered wood
by dante, the first circle of hell
without beatrice —

the bait is well hidden, beneath,
but the fish rises

in rising raises
in diving leaves

strange still circle
inviting dreams:
orpheus beckons
williams beckons
the descent beckons
the ascent beckons
they both become you

LEONARD'S SECRET

I know your secret
is buried in montreal
on murray hill
below the trees

I know your secret
won't travel
though it wants to sit
on all the stone steps
of montreal banks

I know your secret
isn't mine
yours survives
in a transparent shrine
knees worn
from climbing

I know your secret
is the shame of the city
the elders tremble
when they pass it by

I know your secret
is sometimes seen at night
on stanley
& ste catherine streets

but the elders tremble
they make more parking lots
& pour more salt
on the snow

BALLAD OF THE DEPARTING HUSBAND

well i have sung the old songs too
sung for me, sung for you
the question is what
will i do?

what can i do when it is you
have kicked me out
with one good shoe?
where will i go

who do i know
who cares for me as i for you?
fuck off you shit you sd to me —
well should i drown

in the cold blue sea?
or wait until you've had yr fill
of other men from this damn town?
or fuck around as you seem still

to think i want to?
why not you say
you've knocked me up
fucked off, fucked up, & had yr fun

with just about anyone
with a big bum, two tits, or even one.
it's my turn now you little screw
& i will fuck who i want to.

o wife o wife it cannot be
but if it's so —

SUSAN: REMEMBERING/FORGETTING

more moment than mouth
there is something waiting
to be forgotten
but now all is reversed
& the gift we make
of the past
jumps like jack
from the box
to terrify
again
we are children thinking
we are growing up
forgetting we are
already giants
of memory, movement
a thousand years old
we must grow down
no myth or alchemy
or dream of love
can operate
alone
& even
when you leave me
you open gifts
no mouth can close

FOR SUSAN, FOR POETRY

but that love is
the place we make
our own mistakes
you. i.
like water from stones
a landscape of ripples
vast

yr body broken
by joyous lakes
where the wings
of each bird
are anointed

the old ones
could never say
what we must
the old ones
unmelted beards
serpent eyes set in cliffs
to see the comings the goings
"the terrors of the abyss"

whose children we are
white father of wind
in whose beginnings seeds
of new defiance
breed like cones, slowly,
the oldest trees

where they move / my love
in yr mind & body
as word, finger, tongue, cock
are stopped
& move again
vast garden of lakes
where flowers are fish
delicate embrace
you receive me with

& always to confess
the single curse
madness makes
us bless.

AND ALL THESE THINGS ARE TRUE

and all these things are true
I love you

I am afraid to move or make a noise
nothing should disturb you
perfect as you are
neither small nor large
but everything
is an image or a sound
you refuse to put limits to

but what limits are
your strange lungs breathing
a beautiful guitar
what sounds you let me hear

the stories you've told
all things past have
their limits, they have
no hold
on you

I wanted to say
I know what's happening everywhere
in the world, down
the street

don't tell me the news
let me remember
whatever I've known
through you

you are almost asleep
and still you tell me
what to say, how far
the limits are
the limbs of you

NIGHT WALK

there they were: 3 of them
all blonde. my wife's away
i thought
so i crossed the street
& followed them down the block
down by the park
in the dark
& called my dog
put him on the scent
& we went where they went.

what a conspiracy
what a lark
should i murder them in the park?
or on the beach
where the fog & the waters roll?
or rape them one by one, or
two by two
or three by three
down there by the sea?

ALPHA —

the thing conceived in the darkness of the well.
three drunk men emerge from the shack hidden by the bill-
board.
the four star hotel, the room of dreams, lit by red bulbs.
there is no sound connecting the streets. they wander.
we wonder where we are, use the phone, forget.

it wasn't easy, it took, it was the light of the sky
we were afraid of somehow, though the light & the voices
were simple.

the ghosts assemble on the hills
their music is the level line of lights
we are in awe of them
they move toward us

APT. 4B

death masks all over the damn place. someone's crooked hand gives you a glass of wine: long fingernails, twitching eyes. black & white beardsley prints, posters for black light, someone screaming over & over fuck fuck fuck fuck. death masks of beethoven, baudelaire, beardsley, pound, botticelli, olson, dudek, bellow. hundreds of them. aimless violence hovering in the air like lightning waiting for someone without his rubbers. no trees to hide under. thank god. don't mention it, some psychic guy out of his tree whispers from across the room, the smoke drifting out of his nostrils like exhaust from the twin pipes of a jaguar, eyes orange as amber turn signals. someone revving the engine of an old bmw in the corner, neon scarabs flash from the ceiling, the old bike bellows like a wounded minotaur without a labyrinth & nowhere else to go

THE IMAGE
(a preliminary note)

they hung him from the ceiling by his head a little metal skull cap from a light fixture chain screwed into his cranium with an octopus of wire radiating from the skull cap they twined around his shoulders arms torso legs so he hung in the middle of the room with his arms stretched out crucified in space between ceiling & floor all his weight depending from the metal skull cap & screw they told him he would live through it all to the end feel the whole of it know with precision each stage level layer & worse understand it & share his pain with the audience watching it on cablevision the cameras in the corners ready to give four simultaneous views of his body hanging as if weightless/ he felt the weight /& spinning so that the room seemed to turn on the axis of his body in the narrow circle marked by the microphones ready to sound to carry his voice screams to the audience watching channel eight its screen split into fragments when the electrodes covering his body like little black spiders burst with bolts of electrical energy his skin pain shivers through them & more one wall was covered with a bank of monitors he saw himself he saw them once

twice three times four times over & over he could see
himself see them the movements everywhere carried in the
blue silver tv light his body their faces the walls the
screens the instruments the dials the gauges the knives the
scissors the wires the tapes shadows floating in blue
silver cold flame light eyes lenses concentric opening
closing until the light steadies to pulse blue/silver/blue/
silver/blue/silver & then the blue silver light like glass
shimmering in waves told him he would have to relive the
whole cycle arrest trial sentence execution in this
they were immaculate

TAPE 18B

such images:insane
words cannot follow
the beatings of the wings

you don't know where/who
you are
but you imagine
 your shadows
passing behind
 before
 around your body
& yourself within those wings
as they caress the contours
of the hidden city

& you imagine
no one sees or hears
only you are aware
of how they connect with your body as you move
down the street & how the wings pass over whatever
you pass before
there is no telling the madness of these wings
seeds put in the ground are picked by birds before they
blossom
there is no telling
the furrows in the earth
they too have wings
invisible
to all
but those who fly
by them

12/12/70

invasions of light:
occasions for the criss
cross
of shadow, sorrow/all things
inlight but with
the black moon stained
bits of bright glass
the jeweled cave love
makes now:

ruby butterfly
incense wings:

i should have explained, then,
long ago
but "we, too,
collapse beneath
'the weight of things
done & said,' of the lies
we have accepted"

& all such illusions
of interruptions
& the one great one
of paradox.

though some indulge
in disorder
all must come
to rest

margin'd in solitude
the words deny
not meaning, but their love for
opposite

(the children
in the safe warm bath
float & stand
as if their bodies make
an ocean:
"astonishment is the beginning!"

THE SILVER CIRCLE

the silver circle
returns to energy
blesst are eyes
that see

the garden fills with snow
crystal flowers / white trees
melt in yr hair, yr mouth

to make invisible snow tracks
on yr tongue
inside the silver circle
inside the silver rain

bird tracks / dog tracks
the animal's tail dragging in the drifts
nose into it / ears up

the trees listen for once
for many pass
their shoulders so softened with snow
their bodies begin to etch
invisibly
into the soft breath/snow air!

but the car
tires spinning
refused to go
up the hill / the driver
refused to go
down

the snow does not end
so simply with desire
for the sun
or peace

you may only bring
your solitude to the snow

but the snow-woman waits
like a white monument
sleeping, surrounded by
little ones
she waits for that ocean, the sun
to make of her an ocean

/in the garden the pond is frozen.
snow sits in the garden chairs.
cat prints surround the edge.
the pond, the chairs, the prints
overflow./

"the border exists only in the mind"
or so I thought
until I saw
that cold garden's meditation:

"there is nothing but music or love.
for that I would kill"

that is what
the snow-woman knows
her breath lifted in the air like a curling smoke
signals the dawn:

"let music & thunder
be one"

TERMINAL ZONE

ancient aching break over impatient evening.
 set forth yr numbers 1 2 3: be unaware
 beware the siquoia, cypress, pine,
 elm maple yew

branches notes
 shine hear

what is most clear
 what riddles night
 silence
 flight

whose turn to solo in the big machine
 if it comes to this, what matters, what matter is

offshore isolatos forgot
 maggots are not what matters
 the dream is to be
 discarded
 from the bomb bay
 of the bird/machine

stones at the temple
 to go alone, afoot
 to the jewel (hidden
 the flesh scraped open
 by fingernails

pain in the wound of skulls
 the brain hurts
 finger in the open womb
 radar turns the circle in a single sweep
 what matter now that dance
 pass that dream in trance or sleep —

'Je te salue de la Foret Petrifiee'

'I hunt among stones'

'Ou plus rien n'est debout'

2/ "THE SHRIEK OF THE DEATH'S-HEAD MOTH"

water colors hearts & flowers
 rome / paris / venice / munich
 strange transplants / pollen floats through wave
 patterns in trees & stones to hypnotize
 eyes, ears
 to sew shut oceans' desire:

the visual situation is an
 anti-aesthetic determinant

the heart flowers with kisses to show
 a kisscoated antiperspirant sinks beneath
 his wisdom

like

a stone
 sewn inside the flesh
 neat stitching of the moth
 white & black of the waves blown back
 butts turned up
 in the water
 bottles

the double image of the moth
 wrought in silk
 a drop of diamond rot from the edge
 lovers lean from the window ledge
 smoke drifting from their eyes
 ss smoke rings for their lies

in the circus ring
 the bone is dancing

the skeleton dance each bone stamped
 with stars & hearts & flowers & skulls

a poem is a reading list
 of patterns someone missed

o hear the bones are kissing as they cross!

3/ IN SOME DARK & SECRET DAY

in some dark & secret day
 what is un
 expected is
 a refusal to obey

when they cross
 sun & moon
 the beads break out
 the sky sweats
 angels of new disorder
 flesh / wood / stone
 in majestic sign
 of their crossing

soleil noir de joie

the black
 sun of joy arrives
 to annoy
 those who thrive
 on the fearfulness
 of the people

the beads of light break out
 the crown of creation breaks out
 & out of the black nest
 of the sun
 comes desire —

though we have marathons for money
 we refuse
 suicide or murder
 & here, where the weakness of the will comes in,
 we must begin:

there is only one word for what we want
 revolution
 to make us lovers of the world

lovers of the world unite!

or expect to die
 if what we dream of love
 is lie

4/ A TOI LE ROSEAU D'ORPHEE

to you the reed of orpheus must be
 the engagement of possibility
 to refuse the flesh as crucifix
 "from the depths of the millenary pact
 which in anguish
 has for object
 to maintain
 the integrity
 of the word"

& the laughter of the children as a sign

there is no mystery worth waiting for
 in the strata of the brain reived out like rock
 drilled
 exploded

 dynamite for fire
 water & ice

 these are necessities
 food air water fire
 what men know themselves in
 vs the simple made devious
 in complex machines
 the military pact
 the pentagon
 the resourceful abuse
 of resources

 re: the source
 of all we are / to re
 discover
 in the reeds at the river's edge
 food to eat
 air to breathe
 water to drink
 fire to love
 seeds of the flower in which we breed
 defiance of the planners plan for death

 which is to live in nothing
 but the foul mysteries of money

.

VANCOUVER VORTEX
(FIRST MOVEMENT)

15 mountain shadows spin into the room
the edge of the rain forest moves forward
the tall pines know their branches are being murdered
they listen with care as the trucks drag them off
to be tortured into poems

 "to contain anger
 in works of art"

& everyone knows when they hear the word
the forest is falling
the earth suffering
her beauty into vortex
 into green
 revenge