

Restlessness

and other poems

Dorothy Geroch

*with respect, to journalist Milena
Jesenska,*

*who died in Ravensbrueck
concentration camp*

"not like a dog"

Proof Copy

Not for Sale

This book is not meant to be a final version, and it is hoped that a better publisher and book designer will be found. It is a limited edition intended at this point only for friends of Dorothy - who are, however, encouraged to show it to prospective publishers and others who may be interested.

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Restlessness

Prose and Poetry

Dorothy Geroch

1973

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Introduction

Now then, it says in the usual tome
survive the wisely bending reeds,
except when hit by falling trees,
or gobbled by cows on the run towards home.

As I come up from prison

As I come up from prison
I heard a woman singing
voice weakened as under questioning
to the low notes it went crawling:
do not let them fool you
stone walls make a very good prison.
The very best prison of all
Is a wall is a wall is a wall.

You'll find us in our houses

When the first call came my wife she said
my hands that have been worn faceless
have always to me seemed idle.

I was a corpse pinned into my working flesh,
I was a recipient on the dole of my own short breath.
The sweater rolled around her, she put it on so fast.

We were like the naked rock under the sand;
our hearts were clenched around a live green pulse.
Your words passed like a ghost into our dreams.
The heat at the fork of your opinions cried.

In the last extremity a farmer might withhold the seed.
The mirror darkens, we shall never see ourselves face to face.
The light of our enlightenment fades, but to my certain
knowledge,
some of you will die and some will go back to college.

Of your doggedness we mean no respect:
this time, we point and you shoot.

Hearing

The prisoner is brought in once, twice, three times.
First the prosecutor can't be found, then the defense.
Think of a clock-ornament that isn't given
the chance to cry cuckoo, but must stare seemingly ahead,
as in the last stages of a blind-cure.

Oh these parents
with their hands loosely cradling each other,
instead of with fingers bonded to form a really tight defense.

The judge prefers martyrs
with a more panting-before-the-stallions air: certain
remarks penetrate like the point of an umbrella
into a firm green slug. Oh these over-nice appeal
judges, half becoming martyrs themselves when
the afternoon sun strikes them with its sick but
painstaking light, and dust streams into their eyes
Like blood.

But as it was,
The hearing was like a passage that scholars fight
over with their endless blunt instruments, when,
parting their coattails, which is actually a battle cry,
they sink into the hard leather of midnight
horsemen, and each man hears the ring
of his own weapon only when it interrupts
his enemy's pure upward swing.

Left male

His passport or certificates screwed for some reason
in a ball and how with a small underhand movement
like the patting of your ass, he let it go how
it squirmed, touched from foot to foot the gathering coals.
as it arched, as it unfolded,
struck many menacing and artificial poses.

Climbers

Then many are lost who had survived the climb
to rub their icy fingers at the top; and others
grow peacefully old inside the enemy uniforms.
Their chests slowly shrivel away from the facade
of enemy honors. Colleagues cease to ridicule
the slight swelling of her stride.
The shrieks of former victims become the music
to which we are marched.

And in the house, and through the dark

And in the house, and through the dark,
and in assemblies, in the plants,
and though the smoke, the raging smoke
cries, rise.

Behold the lilies of the field, all dead.
They must not bite, they must not reap
our bodies more. Nor in our arms,
nor on our necks, nor in our minds,
nor among our thighs, nor
driven through our naked feet.

The bundled woman

The toneless gray before
the planes come over or
any attack, and there
one bundled woman, short
watching the trees in gray,
the black tight-fisted leaves;
hearing flaks of silence
betray the attack, believes
nothing of what she hears
not; one woman sick in
body, only one of
the settlement going
to be attacked; knowing
nothing, feeling nothing
but the pain; something in
the silence hurts, it comes,
the humming from the leaves,
or is stopped by the leaves;
she sees them less than she
sees the holes they open
in the sky; it deepens gray,
more like smoke in the way

she could reach into it,
could poke holes into it;
from holes and cracks will come
the attackers; she knows
nothing about the sky,
wants to be on her way,
the others are growing
impatient; wonders why
she is caught in a kind
of reverie; but black
trees, she's seen so many,
they are all coming back,
unbending, tall, erect,
dominant and unswayed;
does she imagine yet
a strange smell, what is it?
No, but there will come that
which smells of exhaust when
the attack is begun.

Protest

To the memory of Herschel Grynszpan, who in 1938, in order to avenge the death of his parents and draw the attention of the world to the atrocities being committed by Hitler in Poland, shot and wounded a man whom he mistook for the German Ambassador to France, but who was actually a third legation secretary, himself under surveillance by the Nazis. This act was an excuse for the pogroms that killed 239 people outright and sent another 10,000 to Buchenwald.

There are times when the moon
not only howls, it runs in packs.
A careful man must be sure
to strike the vitals. Terrible
times, when a child can burst
like rotten fruit while walking down the street
holding onto your trigger finger.

My life is only this metal bird
with one rolled wing,
or it has a whetted nether-edge,
or it's a verdict soon to be released.
I no longer see it rising at a slant
out of a four-cornered landscape.
("Put down that kerosene.
Who do you think you are?
Abednigo? Such a senseless waste
of fuel. Here,
jump in this foul-mouthed river.")

Absence

I bear you like a hidden identifying mark,
complete with the perverse urge to show it.

If a finger brush the scallop of unhealthy velvet
and absorb the tear, or redistribute it,
so the face can smile and be benign again;
if you touch in me some private thing, and its secrets
are revealed all at once, like the birds in the swamp-grass;
or to subject you to the siege in which you find
my head like a trumpeter beside you each morning;
or constantly to remind me
of it so that with one foot upraised I don't fall
under the spell of the road...

Every bigamist or two-house owner knows
how disintegration rises from house to house
when you're gone for long.

I've been practicing my opening phrase to you
until it's detached itself and sits here with me
with its head on my lap. Always you are there
like a room one is obliged
to keep empty in an overcrowded house.

A meadow

There is a meadow at whose edge sits a single thick tree,
very shiny at the hipbones where the sun beats down,
and raises a little mist
that hangs just over the ground like a smell.

All day we walk back and forth with our bags half-open
and take the seeds between our soft chewed nails.

The grass under the tree smells like whiskey, but here
in the sun it smells like beer; and I
am precarious like a flower in your hair
with a very long stamen.

I read the future in your hands. I am not impatient.

You move so slowly that the rabbits come out of their holes.

A moment such as when the root tip slips silently under the
water:

I read the future in your hands. I am not impatient.

Mullein

I beg you not to stare at me with these red eyes and sullen.
At a word, I pick, at a word, the little blossoms I forbear;
there is no flower so erotic as the mullein.

If I should leave you, in the night if I should rise,
that in this bed we were like babes too soon allowed to die,
while the living had to go on living, would you then myself
despise? In this you would of course be justified.

For once I want to sing as lovers sing,
and speak to you as mirrors speak:
you are the heat beneath the golden wing;
you are the dark voice in the golden beak.

I beg you not to stare at me with those red eyes and sullen.
At a word, I pick, at a word, the little blossoms I forbear:
there is no flower as erotic as the mullein.

Jealousy: three aspects

I

Someone in setting free the butterfly
touched it, stripped off a whole
fingerprint of the stuff.

II

I adopt your unfaithfulness as a son,
a companion for my jealousy.
They play together at night, they keep each other awake.
One lies on the raft that the other casts off
by snatching at it,
the sails rasping on the dry skin of the air,
a tower whose banners disappear into my dreams.

III

Relief passing like a fold smoothed out of a dress,
waves of relief that never quite visibly break.
The false ending of novels
come late to the heart weary of sifting.
"Ruling out impossible small holes,
 glancing into them anyway.
Generalizing from yourself."

They led me...

They led me to you with commands
and I drank dumbly, then they led me away.
Arrows penetrated me like eyes, but I myself saw nothing.
The colors were faded, though never very rich to begin with.
They alleged that two eyes paced aimlessly
through the newspapers and sometimes mounted
the steep path toward the state pen.
Was either of those my eye? No, my eye is something
that leaps sometimes under the white cloak
of the back of my hand.

Now I relive
everything in the evenings damp and mashed down.
I'm learning to forget you only by rote.

Exile

It's in a strange city as in the home of your youth:
tall buildings vanish into the next world
as shadows rise from below. The sun is only
an overexposed spot, and people pepper you with looks
that are fragments of iron. Those who go to the same houses
arrive separately and wet with fear.
Surely you can always arise in the morning
and burn off your own moisture. These aren't really
bars, they're shadows on the windows cast
by the passage of upright humanity,
their broad backs retreating down the aisles into stern horizons
that lie another strange direction from home.
Already your grainy paws oppress the foreign leaf-molds.

The most private dance was a dead run from wall
to wall

There was always a danger in abandonment,
in the exhaustion of wings; the heart, the eye
of a seabird blinking and blinking.

A shot from a finger leveled from the floor.

When we shared the same bathroom, my own little
towel at times was suspiciously damp.

Dog elegy

Premise: If a thousand humans sat playing with their genitals for an eternity, would one of them be bound to produce the complete son of God?

In every house the world is salvaged
except the bawdy, where they provide abortions.
See, his eyes still glow, oh dowse them gently,
in immaculate upbringing, champions are not born
nor made, nor parents *in loco universitatis* to perform
the graft into the tight slits of their time,
sometimes like God and sometimes like the Nazis.

A dog bitch suffered and out of her
a fingerlong rat all greased with glue,
and that's supposed to be it: let Isaac
catch his own horns in the thicket.

(Whose heart later absorbed mine, so that when I talk,
it's sometimes like a murmur within an arrest.)
He reconnoiters the city for its future occupation
in a hundred years by furry beasts.

In the last days
dogs and cats may appear on the streets.
No more tender, ten-dollar horehounds, you hear
YOU HEAR?

And he guffaws and paws
a sharp gopher-expedition into the floorboards.

Watch out for children, they're meaner than stones
greener than moss, stronger than wolves,
and little by little, like lawyers on appeal,
they all became innocent as crones.

What shall we do when the shepherd's dead,
children, what shall we do when the beast gone down.
Cry like it was the Second Going,
cry till your eyes are pillars of salt,
cry all the way into that hangdog night,
and when the ram blows, refuse to rise
until you hear definite scratching at the back,
and a voice all breathless and boundless cries,
"Get up, get up, this ain't no Pullman death".

Second generation

"The father of your father was neither a bear
nor not a bear," held my father, making an air-tight case.

"Naturally a familiar pater is cruel,
naturally we leap to oppose him with both paws."

He looked up from his blue-lined hand
resting on his notebook like another, littler notebook.

"What if our fathers swing through the streets at night,
thighs like swords and drawing themselves into the law?"

And he smiled like the whole courtroom: first the defendant,
then the defendant's counsel, the victim, the prosecuting
attorney, and the little dog-faced judge.

Portrait

You're like a gray high-intensity light that pounds
the streets instead of letting itself be absorbed.
Your tears sting like piss. Pregnant with insomnia,
you give birth to letters everyone hates to receive.
Late at night while waiting to vomit,
you pull yourself around like a hot gray moon,
and perhaps you no longer address yourself
respectfully and in the first person.

Like a choir

Like a choir holding one note while reaching for another,
like an old flower that calmly shakes itself naked,
in gestures of such delicacy as drunkards only dream on.

Nothing in life has gone according to her plans.
She stands like a shrub that has no strategy against the storm,
she bends as she can, she is strong, she is strong.

When with elastic hands she gathers you in,
each knuckle stands out like a drop of faint milk,
like a choir holding one note while reaching for another.

What if the restlessness which in one represents the most mystical yearnings, the roamings of the mind in search of God or something else, through the labyrinth of various sorrows and spiritual possibilities, what if this restlessness is somehow passed on to, for example, a daughter as a purely physical phenomenon, a matter of a certain number of miles and the repulsiveness of familiar faces? The one with the inherited, the geographical obsession -- how is her restlessness ever to be relieved?

How safe and secure the floor seems to a fearful person. That one can fall no lower than that. Though we never lift our eyes to the distant walls to mark how wide we may be flung.

In winter our long hair rides out on the distant surface of our clothing. Tossing our heads and breathing clouds through our noses, we turn on the fire under the kettle.

Really, the morbid sensitivity of many scientists puts a great strain on their interlocutors. It is not only the particular results of the particular man or woman's own experiments one must embrace and praise, but the entire scientific method and the scientific viewpoint in general. And it seems as though one must go further and -- without tears, of course, -- denounce one's own disordered youth and the widening inconsistencies of one's middle age.

A **cage** whose bars are your own fingers, subject to shriveling and skin cancers, that cannot be butted apart with your own bowed head, but will unclasp of themselves when you at last despair (too late) of petitioning.

The wind slams a door, but not entirely shut. Repeated attempts. Breathe, if possible, through quiet orifices.

The ferocity with which I batter silence out of people! Do I wish to converse seriously with my mother? No, I tear the words out of her teeth like paper towels and, at the same time glancing casually in the mirror, wipe my hands on them.

But really, I defended the Irish today as though I were at an examination. What are the Irish fighting for, is it so that I can run out of breath against my mother? I pile a phrase on one hand, another on the other, she is asked to hold two or three while I rummage in my memory...

A lawyer was asked to take a case in which a man was accused of stealing from a public telephone. The man had been caught not far from the vandalized phone booth with his pockets full of nickels and dimes. Plead guilty, advised the lawyer, but the man refused on the ground that the act of theft was simply the irresistible culmination of a life of poverty, and life, no matter how dismal, could not be considered a crime. Plead *nolo contendere*, advised the lawyer, who was to receive his fee from the court. But the man refused again, explaining that the fact that exigencies of life required him to contend, always to contend, was to be his very defense to the charge. Then plead innocent and be damned! exploded the lawyer, whose patience with criminals was really not very great. But the man agreed that he was not precisely innocent, or even not-guilty, if the telephone company's delicate instrument, disemboweled and hanging from the wall by a single artery, were to be considered. Finally he decided to dismiss the lawyer and simply break out of the jail, a notorious sieve. In this he was successful.

Concerning this case the lawyer commented, "The statutes clearly state that the ignorance of the law never refers to the law's ignorance, but only to the chronic inability of the accused to fathom the advice of their lawyers."

A woman came to visit me who claimed to have known me in my childhood, and indeed I recognized in her face the half-obliterated features of a schoolmate whom I had never particularly liked. She had brought along her progeny, two young boys from whose faces my old schoolmate, even more obscured, glanced dreamily. The boys immediately took possession of the house with the enthusiasm of soldiers. I watched them a while as they outwitted the dangers of concussion from the rain of my falling furniture. Then I turned to the mother who stood peevishly working the door handle.

"I remember you very well", I said.

"That's strange," she replied, "for I never liked you at all, and I went out of my way to talk to you as little as possible".

"Well, perhaps that's the explanation," I said. "So few were those whose ill will toward me did not take the form of a continual clamor in my ears."

R., recovering from another affair, writes us a postcard.
Men, she says (the weather is delightful) are the source of all our
troubles (I am fine, how are you?).

"**Love comes by here so rare**, must think it's the landlord,"
she said.

"Don't mind that so much, though. It's these constant raises in
the rent..."

Our mayor is a man whom even his worst political enemies cannot take seriously. This is not because of anything he does or fails to do. No, he attends official functions, signs papers, holds the most interesting press conferences, and he has been gradually but ruthlessly gathering the reins of power from every department, preparatory, one may well believe, to galloping away with us and our traditionally moderate form of government. The most popular and democratic officials have been removed one by one, but so skillfully that, almost, they themselves do not know that they are gone. So he is a dangerous fellow, our mayor, that nobody will deny in theory.

And yet we grin and can hardly keep from squealing with laughter when he walks into the room; his stern glances make us want to howl, sometimes a commissioner or alderman who has just been stripped of his political career will become so choked with guffaws that he must rush from the room, and tears of merriment mingle with real grief.

It's true that our mayor is a short misshapen man who resembles nothing so much as a little boxer dog. But appearance alone could not account for his effect on us, which is certainly against our interests, for we have been prevented from forming effective opposition solely on account of the strange playfulness which overcomes us whenever we discuss him. Of this phenomenon the Commissioner of Police has said: "My wife won't allow a single word against the mayor because she says that he is good to children. Now there is no record that he has ever done anything beneficial for children, but she says that she has a strong impression that it is so. And when she says this, my wife who ordinarily is more rigorously logical than a judge, she flaps her hand irritably as though waving away a flashlight beam."

There are some who maintain, though others find this hilariously funny also, that the singular contempt which the mayor induces in us is solely a product of a small speech defect which makes it impossible for him to pronounce, for example, "budget" without stopping to draw a deep breath and then spitting out "boo-shit".

Only in its outward aspects does boredom differ from panic. You have changed your mind and come with friends to the meeting. And now they sit, your friends, not even together, seemingly inextricable from the group. Never have things you resolved to do a month ago seemed so urgent. Your friends are too young for you. You must not allow yourself to waste your life wallowing in the same endless arguments. Ten more minutes have gone by. The light bulbs are too powerful for this tiny room. Someone offers to make coffee, plunging you into despair. You consider where you can find a job to support the car you plan never again to be without. The bus with a change downtown at this time of night would take too long, too long. You cannot bear the thought of that first irrevocable movement toward the icy darkness when at any moment someone, someone unlike yourself mysteriously powerful, may mention casually that he or she has to leave, and everyone will break up, as pulling the right string dissolves a complicated cat's cradle.

It is at this point that, slumped down in your chair, you are entertained by the idea of discarding yourself like a husk into the midst of the circle while in reality floating to safety through an open window. Someone at first thinks that you are sobbing as you screw up your eyes and pant through your nose.

When the weather turns warm and simple, you deliberately plan your walk to carry you through the park. The pigeons are preoccupied, and you walk into their mass, then out, while two birds who sit on a drinking fountain look on, mumbling like drunks. You undo the buttons of your coat and run your hands over the iron fences around the statues. The warm wind digs up a smell like a damp human being, and the same wind lifts a corner of newspaper without jarring it. You do not sit down for fear that someone will come along and spoil the mood. You merely slow your pace and circle back to the pigeons whom you pretend to kick aside -- and they good-naturedly feign a little flight.

Wandering forlornly in these hills which all look alike from up close, we came at last to a small lake. After we had drunk ourselves full to bursting, we began, for lack of anything better to do, to toss small rocks into the lake. To our surprise we were able to fill the entire lake up with rocks, between which the water seemed to run down and disappear.

The birds who work their wings desperately, making flying seem arduous. It is the motion of a water pump; first the handle is agitated, then after a pause the water glides.

Everything rests on the firm foundation of impossibility. One snatches all that is good and hopeful out of the general incomprehensibility that, for example, one's fingers were not burned up in the snatching. The delicate astonishment (and this is explained in no theories, however scholarly) when something cool for once brushes one's blood-caked fingertips.

In our city last winter three people froze to death. All three incidents happened early, in a December cold snap. That cold snap snapped the lives out of three people! I tell you, we live on our narrow streets as on a tundra; if by some luck the forced air pours out of these ancient furnaces, sentient we continue behind our barriers of wood and stone. But if something should come undone, something perhaps inexpensive and fixed in haste by a repairman late in his rounds, why then reality whose distant faint growls amused us comes rushing in the doors, and though all night we hear the sirens crisscrossing down the corridors, no help in sight, no help in sight!

Everyone has the opportunity of Abraham. Everyone can lead the future, his Isaac, by the hand, push it down athwart the sacrificial stone, stick the point of a knife into whatever flesh garrisons the neck, and no angels intervening, actually strum the neck again and again until the beads of blood become a torrent.

If you were looking for a way out of a prison, would you run full force against the warden with your pale fists upraised? If you want to fight against evil, will you not find some little-known alternative, leading in a totally unexpected direction?

Unpublished Poem

Preliminary Conversation on Esthetics

They should have brought poetics to itself,
have counted out the pulse of poetry
and showed which neurons, fired rhythmically,
explode the brain to drumming in the ears.
They could have linked it to the lengths of waves
or literally the beating of the heart;
they could have broken mystery apart
and made it part of processes I know.
Experiment would cut the cant to flesh
and probe and probe until it turned the trick.

Then turning like a monkey on a stick,
tormented by the pricking in our ears,
I see ourselves avoid the mother beat.
Once link our beat to processes of heart,
the flesh of body to the flesh of art,
and you will lose the beats you understand
into magic processes of mind.
I see already waterbeds of womb
thunder with their first iambic boom.
Like waterplants we turn against the wave
that shocks our ears and shocks against our skin.
I've noticed babies trying to recall
the painful rhythms learned before the fall
now linked forever to the innocence
of dark and bloody beds, and beat their fists

and sway behind their eyes; and I have heard
that infant races, forming their first word,
will sway their sounds as freely as their fires
long before they've hardened into prose.
And all of it a harking back to dark.

You make a dark of everything I know,
and there are places people mustn't go
if still they wish to utter, "this is so."

*The poem above was submitted to a poetry magazine before
1970, and was not selected by Dorothy for inclusion in
Restlessness. From Trigram Perspective Magazine Archive
held at Washington University in St. Louis, "not to be
recopied without permission"*

Fragments

Sometime during 1973-1974, after the publication of Restlessness, Dorothy sent the passages below to a friend . They are fragments excerpted from journals and were not intended for publication, but were just meant as a sample to show what she was working on at the time. The order of the poems and the dividing marks are from the manuscript. The first two pages are marked 1 and 2, and the remainder of the pages lettered from a to g - I have included these marks in the text. The poem beginning "A woman knows blood" runs over from page d to page e, I think. Otherwise I think that the ends of pages mark the ends of poems. Most breaks are marked, except that I think that the line "Perhaps you're gone" on page e is the beginning of a new poem.

Is it the hoarse cries of the soldiers
that draw you out into the moonlight,
or only the extraordinary luck of the catburglar?

Is it the smooth downward curve of the alien
ship, or only another military secret
blinking rapidly backwards into the night.

the heat itself and how it crawls in you
not concerned with you going about its business
inexorable totally alien
 get it off me

Anger, I think now
nothing you kept me from was worth
having, but I also think
I'm learning to live with you
without saying to myself all the time, I'm living
with anger
I have anger in my house.

Take your time, and when you think
you're ready, we will come.
Do you think we could come now?

You're helping them yourself, you're
opening drawers and helping them choose.
Are you mad? They're taking things
they didn't even want.

a

If he comes to you, he comes to go.
The coming and the staying are grass
growing in the furrows of being gone.

Everyone who stands where you are now
has turned back into the empty spent path
of their coming-up,
or struck out blindly toward the distant trees.
Go into the city, take a job,
to be totally submerged for ten years.
How are they going to stop you?
Your heros crossed tall mountains
and stretched their bellies in the dust.
Some mountains five years high, some ten.
Retrospect is the only guarantee
in safety and everywhere else.

No matter how many times you look,
it either hasn't happened
or it's happened.

This is the place where the true turn false, the austere
rocks that seemed so true and egoless.

What did you want that was my stinking life.

I wanted you be the creator, I, and flow in the deepest
cracks.

Did you make a house? No.

Did you make a garden? Yes. But only the
poorest and with help.

Let me not live and die in darkness. I

cannot see what I cannot see. Let it be my eyes
blind, let the earth's eyes be full of gold.

Where are you going? I can't see a goddam thing.

b

Before we were lovers
but after we met
when the ground of love was certain
but the weight above our feet
subject to strange new laws,
In those days
when I was in a mood like this
and you were not yet the cause
then you were the solution.

Hell with children about. The present is all murk,
and I'm the catfish for it. Raise angels in the
mud. Let them listen to their bellies cry, its
a sweeter voice than the highest angel in the belfry.
The sweet voice in the belly and the sour one
in the head with moustaches.
And devils appear in the shape of voices, and
I call one Devil and one a fine house. My
life has a bad scratch running through it.

I'm not that bastard Hope. I have followed you not
far, I have no razor teeth, I'm a human being,
goddamn it, lower your arm.

Enter love like a suit of armor, then try
to walk in it.

the plush lining of the dawn
the fur of the morning stroked by clean strong
hands of the garden
children in soft things washed a hundred times
talk loud and don't cry.

c

Never born dead never complications at birth
never the long years alone never hanging limp
and gray never monster never

In the place where I could
love you is a soft,
hairless, without
Find it, quick
find it, use the knife

One is being nurtured at every moment.
One is fed, groomed, satisfied, given wings,
led to the jumping-off point, told one can fly,
given a firm shove -- what is so remarkable
is not even when one fails, but that one fails
under the impression that one might
have succeeded.

Sing sadness somewhere high up in the branches
trees do not fall down
his kisses oh he was my comrade, sing
sadness, drown the feet of the woodchopper

We don't speak the same language.
What's a homonym for pane?
What's a homonym? Ha! We don't speak
the same species. I've lived on the street for
eight years, and you've lived in your head, in a
small seedy room with velvet drapes,
on the street, yes, but those were the days.
What's the word for help? We don't speak
No, help? Well, there's a certain --
No. no, HELP! No word. It's the same
here.

d

There was something there that wasn't filth! There
was something there that wasn't the enemy! There was
something in there that had to be saved, oh damn don't
ask a lot of stupid questions. Get me a ladder, a rope,
a lifebuoy, a piece of tape.

Good morning garden leaves cruelly deformed
or missing tiny drops of dew,
huge ladybugs
why you have bent this pole
almost out of the ground.

Now, now I am alone it is I
who am calling it goes too deep for belief
I am alone and there is none to help
Listen, if you can.
I am broken open, this is my blood in your earth
and there is none to help
if not you If not you
I cannot rise, my heart
is hunted down by trouble, come and see
where it lies bleeding, and there is none to see
I am nothing but the wound, its edges are in hell
Let me lie down on your bed, I have come open
not of the body only

A woman knows blood
when it's fresh and black
breaking off in pieces and whirling
in the water
when it's thin and pink and invisible
on the hand
and when it's almost dry, shitcolored
e
leaving fingerprints
Get rid of it all, don't let anyone know
say you have no such thing, at least
not today, no it's not going on now,
and you never let your hands get on it.
How can you pretend to be innocent? Then
you can go off and lock the door
and with cool sure fingers deal with it.
Perhaps you're gone. Perhaps that's why
I seem to have more room.
Do I want company? Someone with a car
to fill it and come? A few dozen strangers
talking to my dog? I think I want
something else to happen now.
Foreign influences I can detect
hairs caught between your teeth
what was there to laugh at
when the wind was up? I was laughing
because I was alone. And the wind was up?
The wind was up.

Perhaps you were never there,
but I think not. Oh this room, this room, do I
want someone to fill it and come? Why were you laughing?
Company, oh my god

Thought it was water, thought it was sand
but it's rock at the bottom.
Thought I could sit, thought I could stand,
but I'm moving on.

f

Don't like standing in a crowded bar,
don't like his hand on my arm.

Don't like these evenings all alone. I'm
going to buy myself a car
that won't break down. Then I'm going
to sell my things and go.

If I can get a car that won't break down,
that's where I'll go. (Sell my books too --
Leave every damned thing here.

The leather straps keep you from falling,
but the hand gives you control.

Money suffers, money's leaves fall like
a dry rain, the figures march twenty, five,
down the page then sucked back up the hole
to the mother of money.

Meanwhile, what am I supposed to do? Cash
an empty check, bounce a pair of rubbers --
Why don't you go out and drink it up,
my dear?

If you're hungry there's a loaf of bread
and mayonnaise on the table. If you're thirsty
there's a bottle with carousels on it.

You won't get off for a week. I fooled you.

I'm already off pass that wine we're out
of mayonnaise.

Just words bobbing in the barrel
and fish us up a couple, charley
What I want is a man who doesn't suffer
in tedious silence there's always
a door, but open it, open it. Looks like
a bordello to me, chum. Look at these
cushions and oh my God

g

If you could relax for just one moment, but
you know what other people are like Pain
is something they carry around in suitcases
and leave in women's restrooms, they
leave it for you. they can't understand why
you can't understand, why it blows up,
why the women's restroom blows up
when you turn the handle

Those who embark on romantic adventures and
succeed have nothing but contempt for those who
want to join them out of a sense of romanticism

If happiness is related to a disease
of the memory and the waking state is pictured
as a young beast lean and glossy, and if
those moments when you feel anything at all
you feel you are being pursued, and further,
if there is a wide river or any other form
of generalized unhappiness, then -- why does she start
and gaze around her where do I know those eyes
the foam swirling delicately at each hoof
not as a tiger but something
else possibly in a dream or out of a coffin
no in the center of a flower no

in a painting that's it no a mirror
no when I was coming awake that's it
when I was coming awake and I had forgotten
yes? I had forgotten yes?

summer's full weight an object of ridicule
and a threat and she responds by staring
at you all the color long ago dried from
her eyes

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