

83.1

NO LAST WORDS

As silent and dreamy

You slid under covers

Did I miss your farewell

As life drained into tubes

Unquenchably dry?

What was left to be said

That could change how I feel

About the missed curtain

As it drew to a close

On a death met head on

And a life spent alone?

For fear that I shamed you

I did not enquire

What words you had spoken

Without me to hear.

1/8/83

83.2

THE END IN YOUR EYES

That stare--your last  
Annoyed me with  
Its frank statement  
Of foreknowledge.  
Wanting to shout,  
I didn't see,  
Eyes to corners  
Straining to see  
How long you took  
To break it off--  
Those eyes that stared  
The wet night ~~right~~ down;  
That final Fall.

Your new absence  
Has a center  
Of gravity  
Unblinking.

1/8/83

83.3

ALONE AT NOON

Haze-thick sunlight  
Glazes the field.  
Grass and shoulder  
Blades meet, touching  
Through fabric weave.

No insect, no  
Bird-cry or tear  
Is heard:  
Baking to  
Dryness and hatred.

Crusty-cheeked boy  
In love with a promise  
That the lonely  
Vacuum stillness  
Has purpose and  
Ending.

1/27/83

83.4

NIGHT CALLER

Seeding like bleeding  
The fluid flew out  
To conjure the Devil  
To spellbind the night  
The fetish, the juju  
The hand held the knife  
Like Isaac I trembled  
My member full-blood  
Not knowing which stronger  
My hunger? the blade?

1/27/83

83.5

RELEASE

My slot-car mind raced  
Over convolutions  
Just skimming the crests  
Of smooth grey hills  
Slicing softly still night air  
In a slip-stream of silence,  
In a body of dreams.

2/7/83

APPLICATION

Speak, he said, and it was recorded that everything was secret. That the public had no right. That this was on the record. That I was honor-bound.

And speak I did, for that interrogation in private in his room. In poising each word like dancing, in feeling for what I felt he'd like to hear, I slowly filled the reel.

But as that smoke-curved lip lifted to sneer a smile at me, I felt confident of failure; positive of doom; sure of some omission or commission as my sin.

This interview is over, he said with pointed tone of voice revealing no trace or indication of my failure or my pass. We'll call you and Thank you.

2/8/83

83.7

WEST AFRICA

Your parents call you

Jefferey.

But to satisfy

Your kinship yearnings

For roots

Unsullied

By the white man:

Legal, rightful, willful,

You now are Ajamu.

You claim a heritage

Without kwashiokor, tse-tse,

Yaws and the rest.

Couscous in the Cuisinart?

Constructed commonalities,

And familial fantasies

Delude.

Shall I then be Boris,

And live on beets

And bodka?

To prove

What:

My homeland?

Dignity is its own geography.

2/15/83

83.8

ESCHER

Marking time  
indelible,  
I move  
to make my mark  
in time  
unforgettable  
as a marker  
blazing  
a trail  
to demise.

2/19/83

TRANSPORT

He took me  
while sleeping  
imperfect  
to places  
unseeing  
in darkness  
my heaven  
appeared.

I shuddered  
awaking  
to firmness  
of body  
and warmth  
undertaking  
to be my  
release.

We coupled  
in daylight  
with dew-sweat  
abounding  
enjoining  
our fragile  
yet driven  
desire.

And after  
as sitting  
in silent  
re-entry  
with smiles  
at our fingers  
swore death  
to our past.

2/19/83

83-10

PENITENCE

The path to the altar  
of your remembrance  
is worn smooth to hard-pack  
and the homage begins  
to feel like stations  
of the cross on knees  
knobby with regret.

Excommunicated  
from you in death  
much as in life,  
this supplicant searches  
for appeasement of the demons  
that lay in every careless word  
passed between us.

Rites are performed  
immutable  
in repetition  
are as stigmata  
instantly induced  
by association  
with the past.

Forgiveness lies,  
not yours to give,  
in friends made  
with the living body  
of fact secured  
in knowing  
that I have paid.

2/23/83

BODY WORK

Something in lines  
that curve muscular  
drives me  
to that point  
where reference  
to the mundane  
is lost  
and I am ready  
to obey  
call or whim  
that might inflict  
itself on me.

Lines that define  
the words in flesh  
hard as consonants  
outlining tits  
cleaving to ripples  
that end in brush  
where pride stands erect.

Anointed with oil  
in slippery sainthood;  
a bicep-tricep trinity  
I beg to be seeded  
and in some assumption  
pass Mary enroute  
to bliss  
in care of  
your fatal physique.

2/24/83

83.12

THE LEGACY

From the people  
who brought you up  
there appears  
no end  
of ties  
that become their own need  
for who can stand  
on feet unbound after years?

The years flush back;  
rush crowding  
in an antonym of prevue  
that won't break off  
'til the film loop  
has passed the gate.

We close off rooms  
to tenants  
who won't leave  
but keep us up  
with rapping  
tapping commotion  
to remind the living  
of the dead.

My parent's child  
has sucker roots  
extending  
soil-binding fingers  
deep in constipated earth  
clay-caked  
and impenetrable  
from habit.

My superstitious duty-sense  
offers up libation  
to forebears:  
a sacrifice  
to redundant gods  
that I might not tread  
those same steps  
Sisyphian.

More than genetic consequence  
I strive to prove  
the hocus of heritage  
as copied carbon  
in helical double-trouble  
like an exoskeletal ghost  
of superstructural armor  
forcing actions from  
the occupant.

Selecting my new family,  
a wild strain mutation  
bearing no relation  
to sins of the father  
and hopes of the mother:  
an end to the line.

There is Hell  
in unlearning  
what is gene-deep.

2/24/83

83.13

ATTACK

Fear learns  
through panes--  
Heathcliff  
moaning on moors  
for something lost.

Dream-face familiar  
as yet unplaced  
becomes fixation  
on tip of tongue.

This anxious state  
infuses life  
with vague ambience  
misgiving importance.

It hovers,  
miasmatic companion  
as I shuffle  
ragged with sameness  
sometimes relieved  
when doppel gets lost  
in the ganger of dreams.

2/25/83

83.14

THE CATCH

I know the lure  
of suicide--  
weapon  
of frustration.

The urge to hurt  
for poor attention.

Gone,  
am I witness  
to the pain  
I have given?

I stop, postponed,  
satisfaction  
uncertain.

2/28/83

83-15

WORSHIP

I slip into that land  
of the red octagon:  
No change:  
but by miracle  
of hands laid on:  
The Repetitious Rite  
The Repetitious Rite.

I watch as smooth palms  
hiding latticed  
get greased  
for promised absolution.

I see fingers  
still sticky  
feed mouths  
purple from wine  
unbloodied.

Still He comes  
in mushroom dusk  
to light an alcove  
with His special darkness.

3/5/83

83.16

MORNING

I woke to skyless cloud  
encroaching from the bay  
artificial gloaming  
my morning eclipsed.

I rose, unrefreshed,  
creaking and obstinate  
in caffeine withdrawal  
sinuses clogged.

I blink at the clock.  
6:05 it blinks back  
as water boils  
extraction begins.

I gulp hot drug  
and imagine  
who it was this time  
~~that~~ kept you from our bed.

3/11/83

83.17

VISITING HOURS

I'm sitting there thinking with an empty glass  
(no misplaced modifier) about her laugh and if  
the neighbors hear and if so why they don't  
complain.

And I'm thinking (a little wine-loosened) that  
I now have proof that all the muscles in her body  
haven't yet atrophied or dissolved in fat when  
I see her belly contract under the T-shirt  
as she laughs into the phone.

Then all I can see is the crutch top  
digging in and a cataract of flesh giggling  
at me with her and I want to go home now even  
if I have to walk in the rain I hear on the windows  
behind me.

I gulp at how much food supports such  
bulk and I feel strained  
as food eats her more than she it and yet  
I still talk about it and it slaps me  
into facing my addiction.

3/11/83

83.18

VISITING HOURS

I'm sitting there thinking with an empty glass,  
no misplaced modifier, about your laugh and if  
the neighbors hear and if so why they don't  
complain.

And I'm thinking wine-loosened that I now have proof  
that all the muscles in your body  
haven't yet atrophied or dissolved in fat when  
I see your belly contract under the T-shirt  
as you laugh into the phone.

Then all I can see is the crutch top  
digging in and a cataract of flesh giggling  
at me with you and I want to go home now  
even if I have to walk in the rain I hear on the windows  
behind me.

I gulp at the quantities of food involved  
in supporting such bulk and it gnaws at me  
to see the food eat you more than you it  
and yet I steer the talk in edible directions still  
unable to ignore the topic  
any more than your fat.

3/11/83

83.19

AN OREXIS

A magic mushroom circle of craving  
hides from view  
(NO PUBLIC EATING)  
in gorged solitude.

Pinching, pressing, prodding,  
in instant expectation  
of metamorphosis  
to fat.

And after exercise  
that machine —  
knobby tempter:  
2 LARGE GRANOLA COOKIES  
it smiles  
just at me  
in the lobby as I leave.

Energy consumption  
as counter-compulsion  
out of fear  
for each sit-up less  
one ounce more.

Living  
for those moments  
unconscious of body  
taking me out of bounds.

3/24/83

83.20

POSITIONING III

When I explain myself  
it has no substance  
out of context  
to the texture of my life  
making peaks  
and troughs  
of experience  
waffle and wobble  
in and out of relevance.

The important sounds petty,  
the poignant, puerile,  
with me the chronic champion  
of the dissatisfied.

Can life stand  
alone in relation  
to its accumulation  
of moments?

I want to be  
that passenger  
allowed to sit face forward  
with back to where he's been.

3/24/83

83.21

MEDIA MORTE IN VITA SUMUS

The delivery  
was successful, today,

A brain-dead incubator  
obliged carriage  
two months  
on machines.

After the cesarian  
they turned it off.

The womb tomb  
breathed twice  
on its own  
and died.

3/30/83

83-22

TRANSIT

His eyes ignited  
the intensity of death.

Gloved hands  
with the fingers  
laced as he stared.

No foothold was visible  
to scale that face and peer  
into windows for a view  
that might stop my heart.

Are these the eyes of the mad  
or of the cruelly driven?  
Kundalini lights  
or the Serpent's fire?

Paralyzed  
in magnetic fields  
of his line of vision,  
I could not find escape.  
So pulling the bus-cord,  
a life-line  
signal to those above,  
I landed on the pavement  
with thoughts of cat's eyes  
and "The Village of the Damned".

3/31/83

83-23

CORPSE

The routine lies varicose  
on the calf of the days  
pumping existance  
to the surface of life.  
Life lived livid -  
parched for the juice  
variety holds.

The body of years  
is sinewed with lies  
stalking the archives  
and gleaning from salvage  
a canniballed form.

More bored than jade,  
it waits for the message:  
The usual is dead,  
long live the customary.

4/17/83

83. 24

LAYING TO REST

I ~~keep~~<sup>am</sup> riding that bus:  
49 Bloor West,  
digesting sorrow  
like sour-ball gum  
that burps up with bile.

I shuttle forth coldly  
from flat full of strangers  
to husk of a home  
selling mementos,  
vacating the place  
finger all puckered  
from playing Dutch boy.

There's no healthy distance;  
Remorse moves in space,  
hypertime, hyperpity--  
homeing in on your dread.

You left in such haste  
there wasn't the time--  
nylons on towel rack,  
jacket on chair back.

What to do with the parcel  
of glasses and key-chain;  
bible and change?  
Too close for comfort.

← too abrupt? ↗

As, converting to cash,  
I price what is priceless,  
crows gather near me  
to pick out my eyes.

Archeology lies  
in layered remains  
I find as I sift  
through chronology.  
~~The~~ more recent the trace  
~~the~~ less meaning it holds  
as digging exposes  
nerves of the past.  
Memory's lead  
transmutes into gold  
buried at sea  
under turbulent skies.

Does reality lie?  
I move in your presence  
in spite of the fact.  
More strings are attached  
than a lawyer can cut  
playing paper and scissors,  
matches and rock.

4/17/83

83.25

SONG IN INDOLENCE

I lay down for a nap  
needing to feel replenished  
and awoke depleted,  
my hair a sweaty nightcap.

Dislocated from plans  
previously plotted,  
I moved on that tangent  
across the room  
to sit with the headphones  
suckling divorce  
from a warmer companion,  
feeding on grapefruit  
ripped from the rind.

And I ~~rolled with~~ <sup>followed</sup> the words ← cliché  
of Márquez  
as he ran-on unending,  
sentences, in trances,  
page-long, allowing  
a mental meander  
on work, sex and play  
of the diodes  
marking the beats  
of the music  
fed from the deck.

So still without answers,  
I returned to the pillow  
without consolation.

4/17/83

83.26

THE MYTH OF THE GENTLE ENDOMORPH

To be fat is to be jovial,  
physically inept,  
and harmless.

With so few defences  
you begin you fatty build-up  
of self-effacing polish  
glossing over anger.

Grabbing a handle-ful  
you feel you could rip it off  
leaving you bony;  
absolved of all pliancy.

Once you starve the mask of adipose  
to the sinews of the truth,  
what will be your protection?

4/19/83

83.27

CLAIM CHECK

When my father died  
I worried where my allowance  
would come from and carried  
a millstone of guilt -  
a decade as head of the house.

When my mother passed on  
there was a banquet of guilt *change word*  
from circumstances beyond  
my controlling and yet, *the its skeletal*  
I will feast ~~to~~ *of its bounty* ~~its bounty is bones.~~ *to be eaten*

When I am called from this burden  
may there be no one present  
to play a Saint Christopher  
encumbered by baggage  
from my unclaimed ticket.

4/22/83

TODESWUNSCHTRAUM

or

CHRONICLES OF A DEATH RETOLD

For Ian Curtis.

Listening to songs on tape  
of a man now dead by suicide  
I tapped some strange memento mori  
of a life contained  
by morbid lyric  
come to save me  
turning madness into method--  
methodology.

Voracious songs  
with grapple hooks extended  
pulling the unwary  
into the swell and syntax  
of a voice with being  
and demonology.

Tod. Tod. The leit-motif  
draws the traveller  
down funneled arteries  
to event horizon dissolution  
of purpose and perspective  
where he breaks water  
filling different lungs.

The seduction of wishes of endings  
like Endkampf callings  
is resisted by the waking  
to death as a life to be lived.

God's perfect messengers are not.

5/14/83

83-29

EYE TO EYE

When you spoke to me of Girtie's Gorgeous Gash,  
some alienate, Italianate thing, I could not grasp it  
or your desire, self-fed automaton of greed  
unheeding not needful of reinforcement by me.

Blood of the eccumenical rose to a head  
to beat understanding into it, my calm belying  
lying beneath, I saw seeing nothing--  
the heart of difference.

6/9/83

83.30

CRITIC'S CORNER

Assailed by the primitive, you sit hunkered over  
the jungle jugular grapevein listening  
for the rhythms assonant to your pulse.

Words boxed your ears and you lost your grip  
on wrist with fore and index--  
the patient did not die.

When negotiations finished with structuralist,  
minimalist ist-isms, you poised yourself in neutral  
acceptance waiting for each font to fill.

Categorical hooks served as hangers  
each critical fate with perspective past  
contemporary calculation.

Neither judgements nor elections need a quorum.

6/30/83

WHAT YOU HAVE GIVEN

I insisted on taking  
that step with you  
into dangerous vagueness  
of losing ourselves  
to each other.

Instilled with a sense  
of needing more  
of taking less  
I came to you  
like unleavened dough.

I paddled quickly  
to fill in gaps  
now swollen  
to joyous bursting  
of old frontiers.

I now have to pause  
to see the strides  
we take together--  
baby-step continuous  
as we advance.

Our book of changes  
compiles itself  
with the broken  
and the solid  
and love between the lines.

6/30/83

83.32

UNDERCOVER

When habit fails you, indifferent  
patterns with oily reality slide  
away underpinnings to reveal  
underpinings of grim dissatisfaction.

When disruption breaks the chain  
of commonplace events  
in their dutiful procession  
to the altar of evasatory  
tactics, your discomfort sets  
gods up less concerned with order.

Repeat to repent is the chorus  
of repair, as time is strapped  
back to wrist and the lullaby cycle  
of songs continues.

7/12/83

83-33

PROPER

I caught you staring in time  
to return the dropped hankie  
of your intent  
only to have you become  
prim again, in business suit  
at luncheon.

7/15/83

Barry Bradford

83-34

EARNINGS

I miss my child  
who sat and waited  
reading and watching  
in dark assimilation.

I would lead him  
from one forest to another  
from pine to birch sagacity  
trembling with the leaves.

I need to rescue him  
from solemn tales  
and spell-bound webs  
of literature.

But sparing is depriving  
and such solitary fruit  
can, in years of need,  
serve the starving  
in bowls of painful blue.

8/6/83

Δ+

PUNK

A muzzy thatch perched  
parched atop a head  
spent from beating pillows  
into submission all night.

Thus lay my last Mohican  
resting from his wardance  
unpainted and decostumed  
whiter than under bellies.

Initiated into tribal rites,  
I stare upon the real boy  
and blink at rough conceits  
chained and studded in desire.

Hot youth has welded ego  
to dreams of wildest anarchy  
as its only weapon in the war  
with green frustration.

I am the Wild Boys' plaything.  
I am the mild boys' envy.  
I am the bad boy's dream.

9/10/83

63-97  
83-36

GAY PRIDE

Watching the night's god go pure  
in daylight  
slipping in a stream  
of consciousness  
slimey stones submerged,  
I poised pivotal  
a grey demesne  
of the pre-caffeine state.

In homo-relativity,  
commonalities,  
beyond the obvious need  
for gratuity as sex,  
where we see  
gland-to-gland--  
are not easily found.

So, as God sits  
in right relation to the world,  
where do we find  
common ground--

    "she sits by sea-side  
    sifting sand"  
looking for grains that match.

Desire is our abundance  
exported to the needy,  
marketed domestically,  
promoted and packaged,  
with uniform consistency  
and purity of party line.

What we recognize  
in one another  
is that droning undercurrent  
that allows us  
the luxury of effortless  
auto mated erotic  
relation  
with no social  
work to be done.

The Disposable Date  
in the eternal

terminal

interminable

bar

with the thump-thump--bump-bump  
tooling us to a smooth perfection  
with a dialectic  
approved by consensus.

*Even so, I join the chorus:*  
Don't wake me

don't shake me

I'm sleeping while awake

enjoying every moment

like every moment

is like every moment

like the moment before.

9/17/83

*Bruce Byford*

~~83-37~~  
83-37

INTENTIONS

What makes them offer?  
What goads them  
into cheap advice  
all-gifted  
with clear sight  
and a vision of the Pure Land  
held more fervent  
than a Buddhist?

What makes me cringe  
when I see an answer  
so clearly that I bite my tongue off  
as my eyes fill with tears?

What makes people do that?  
They say it's concern  
they care.  
I don't think so.

9/18/83

FLIGHT

The lavatory boxes on the 767  
 are Teflon coated  
 dry  
 refusing to wet while beading  
 my liquid waste away.

Soft muted blues and greys,  
 sky-colors,  
 grace the cabin  
 as in dim movie light  
 the nun watches "War Games"  
 with headphones over habit.

I remark on the withdrawal  
 of my person/personality  
 into its Japanese picnic box  
 with nested needs  
 and fitted fears

-tako, maguro, tamago-

in nori bondage  
 on sticky rice  
 where economy  
 meets secrecy  
 under stark black lacquer.

I wrote a check once,  
 the provided envelope saying:  
 "Attention: Lock Box 63".  
 I could see the Brinks guard  
 initiate my payment  
 with ceremony.

But what a storehouse  
 where all I value lies  
 with all I fear and know and feel!

9/25/83

BARE BONES

"...in the steadiness of that gaze:  
he made me more naked than without  
clothes..." -- Robert Gluck

Elements of a Coffee Service.

My face wore, he said,  
that look  
that too-good-to-be-real look.

I admitted to being unused  
to treatment so warm  
as well as post-orgasmic.

His confidence  
assured my lines,  
my graceful bow-outs,  
into innocent amnesia  
bereft of experience  
as I remembered  
the length of time  
since last relation  
of this kind.

We moved from bed to shower,  
to steam to pool to shower  
to flushed unsureness  
as to future meetings  
and the exchange  
of numbers.

In this community  
of the sex-numbed  
such astuteness and ability  
to read me through my covers  
alarmed me  
and excited me  
in equal measure.      9/25/83

TRANCE AND DANCE

"But if they knew you shoot yourself-  
a beast- you shoot yourself-- just private  
fascination." -- Cabaret Voltaire.

Fixed gaze  
at stainless steel,  
bead on bevel,  
you contemplate  
which favorite track  
to play  
in private entertainment.

Jealous of this moment  
you guard the secret well;  
your blind ecstatic vision  
or God and life and angels  
who never need to land.

The song plays  
the needle dulls  
the sound decays  
to fuzzy indistinctness  
as fascination turns  
to frenzy;  
injection to dejection,  
and Patmos fades from view.

9/30/83

GRAFFITI ON POTRERO

"Resist God" is on the wall.  
I see some guerilla band  
in Che Guevara drag  
in league against the tyrant,  
immoveable object--  
a foe they've never seen.

Resist the concept or the fact?  
Resist exacted moral tribute?  
Resist some foul control?  
Or just a point to rally round  
"Vive la Resistance!"

Lead not to temptation  
that we might yet be saved  
by boys in camouflage fatigues  
by device or some construction  
outside the one called Man.

10/1/83

---

LANGUAGE LESSON

The search for diacritical  
marks informs me  
how my living words  
will be pronounced.

Mishap glottal stops  
punctuate the aspiration  
of my days' enunciation  
ragged from rote.

Stress points pass  
in diphthong swiftness  
and I live sentenced,  
unaccented,  
to wonder at my story's  
ellided denouement.

10/1/83

EQUINOX

Lines of demarcation:

the moving line of dawn  
the moving finger writing

Lines of direction:

wise referants  
foolis rules

Lines of projection:

subjective postulations  
objective constructions

Lines of perspective:

to allow latitude  
to deny horizons

Lines extrapolated:

the Maginot premise  
the argot of theory

Crossed lines in crucifixion

Convergant lines recanting

Poetic lines pointing

to the given space between.

10/7/83

ASSUMPTION

Seven seas and four winds  
bring three fates.  
These numbers are classic.  
Ten fingers with two rings  
and no marriage.  
These numbers are real.

Ages, like pages, are riffled  
cartooning our figures  
to dance like St. Vitus.  
The manipulation of cards;  
the sleight of the cheat  
make digital magic  
that passes our time,  
if not understanding.

The calculation of ways  
to spell our an exit  
possesses me more  
with each slicing passage  
of the pendulum's swinging  
toward a regression  
where the decimal point  
of begining is lost  
to my distant sight.

No one's eyes are bigger  
than that stomach.

10/9/83

SINGULARITY

What if you shone a flashlight  
and the light came back at you  
in a V-turn  
of knife sharpness?

A star begining its collapse  
gathering its skirts around  
its core being  
introspective.

Could Narcissus in his trance  
have warped the world as well as  
a star's old age  
concentration?

Radiation is swallowed  
indiscriminantly well  
by the weighty  
stellar gourmand.

No whirlpool water model  
can imitate voracious  
black hole hunger  
feeding itself.

Chromatic nihilism.  
Reflexive geometry.  
The funnel drain,  
gravimetric.

God's gateway to tomorrow  
framed in flux of light's absence:  
the wedding ring;  
the singularity.

Why would one attempt escape  
from love's nexus without light  
but with power  
to transform all?

When you called out in the March gale  
and the words were stuffed back down  
your gasping throat  
that was one thing.

We continue to ignore  
the power of perspective  
in our lust for green grass  
and the unspoiled pasture,  
dungless in its purity.

10/13/83

83-46

PHASE CHANGE

The fifth line  
moving  
converting.

The inversion of opposites  
as masculine  
flips  
in its instability  
to feminine, which pushed  
to its limit, unstable,  
flops;  
masculine again.

The process accelerates  
as flip-flop flickers  
like scan lines  
on TV screen:  
invisible.

Genius pressed  
converts at peripheries  
into the madness  
of the well-known fringe  
of possibilities.

Static.  
Discontinuous.  
Meaningless.

Now ride that Moebius strip,  
half-twist,  
from one face to the other  
and tell me that instant  
where one becomes the other.

11/16/83

83-47

MISCONCEIVED

He'll be fat and balding  
with sour breath  
and sweaty palms.

He'll want some trip  
no one else will give him,  
at least, not for free.

And I'll need my very best,  
my very hottest fantasy  
to keep me hard.

But when he arrives  
he's average; he's frightened,  
and he's lonely as death.

He wants nothing special.  
He wants to look at me.  
His need is like suction.

I take the money first  
distracting his thoughts  
from buying and selling.

He comes quickly, frantically,  
and for a second  
he believes.

12/28/83

F3-48

JUJU PSALM

There is a man in my life.  
He smokes  
a big black cigar.  
The smell is pure erection.  
He has a moustache and a veil of hair  
that can't conceal  
such muscular lust.  
He exists to manipulate desire,  
and to fulfill his needs,  
which is all I ever want.

His eyes make me fear him  
and hunger for his brutality.  
He rules me.  
I am never without his presence  
nor out of his shadow.  
He is confidence,  
easy masculinity,  
and my standard for everything.  
I look for him everywhere.  
No one yet has used his name.  
No one yet has claimed his place.

12/25/83

The Child

OR

THE AMNIOTIC POND

NEW ORDER

my order

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omit poems noted above -  
"Boxes" should be last

Suggested titles for book -

"AMNIOTIC ZONO" "Boxes" "EVENT HORIZON"

I have made some changes - mostly in section titles -

82-04

SUMMER

You're on a boat.  
Listen to the lap-lap.  
Smell wet wood and old bait.  
Feel the hard edge of sun.  
Trail a finger through the fluid.  
Find it unwet, un wetting;  
immiscible with flesh;  
flesh mostly water.  
Rechristen you forehead.  
A cool cross borne in sluggish summer air.  
Make the world silent;  
make it sing.  
Are you isolated or integrated?  
Drift in that amniotic pond  
free of attachment.  
Remember how it was.  
Hear tissue paper whisper  
> in the calm white hot high noon of your life.

8/3/82

Fixed  
not reprinted

83-34

EARNINGS

I miss my child  
who sat and waited  
reading and watching  
in spongy assimilation.

I would lead him  
from his forest to another  
from the pine to a birch sagacity  
trembling with the leaves.

I want to rescue him  
from solemn tales  
and spell-bound webs  
of literature.

But such a sparing is depriving  
and the fruit of solitary years  
can, in years of need,  
serve the starving  
in bowls of painful blue.

8/6/83

Death, Family +  
Family Death  
(or)

FAMILY, DEATH, AND  
DEATH IN THE FAMILY

MOTHER'S LOVE

As you lay dying  
I sat coping  
with why I felt what I did;  
with the right reasons  
for not caring  
for someone I didn't know.

Were we ever friends?  
We were hardly friendly.  
No camaraderie there.  
And that filial devotion?  
It never knew me.

You're a blank guilt  
I can't erase.  
A conundrum  
in a foreign language.

Did you face the truth,  
separating the son  
from the person?  
No, the son was the son  
whether risen or fallen,  
death do us part.

Instilled with duty  
responsible  
obliged  
I labor  
under values  
tracing ownership  
back home  
to you.

I have hurt you  
and not understood you  
and understood you  
to be disappointed.

No communion for us.  
You pass unreconciled  
dreams unshared.

I stand, irresolute  
consuming life:  
your gift.

You and blame  
enter solution  
where love holds us  
apart.

11/26/82

83-24

LAYING TO REST

I'm riding that bus:  
49 Bloor West,  
digesting sorrow  
like sour-ball gum  
that burps up with bile.

I shuttle forth coldly  
from a flat full of strangers  
to a husk of a home  
selling mementos,  
vacating the place  
finger all puckered  
from playing Dutch boy.

There's no healthy distance;  
Remorse moves in space,  
hypertime, hyperpity--  
homeing in on your dread.

You left in such haste  
there wasn't time--  
nylons on towel rack,  
jacket on chair back.

What to do with the parcel  
of glasses and key-chain;  
bible and change?  
Too close for comfort.

As, converting to cash,  
I price what is priceless,  
crows gather near me  
to pick out my eyes.

Archeology lies  
in layered remains  
I find as I sift  
through chronology.  
--more recent the trace  
--less meaning it holds  
as digging exposes  
nerves of the past.  
Memory's lead  
transmutes into gold  
buried at sea  
under turbulent skies.

Does reality lie?  
I move in your presence  
in spite of the fact.  
More strings are attached  
than a lawyer can cut  
playing paper and scissors,  
matches and rock.

4/17/83

83-27

CLAIM CHECK

When my father died  
I worried where my allowance  
would come from and carried  
a millstone of guilt  
a decade as head of the house.

When my mother passed on  
there was a banquet of guilt  
from circumstances beyond  
my controlling and yet  
> I will feast ~~on~~ its skeletal bounty.

When I am called from this burden  
may there be no one present  
to play a Saint Christopher  
encumbered by baggage  
from my unclaimed ticket.

4/22/83

*not repurposed*

82-34

REPAINTING ROOMS

or

THE REAL STUFF ALWAYS DRIES LIGHTER THAN THE CHIPS

I don't remember  
how something turned into  
nothing or its ashes.

It's loculated:

Walled-up and boil-like  
under pressure and  
waiting for lancets

Of association

With my memories  
of us as we were,  
that home now stripped bare.

Who sits there now?

12/28/82

~~The interest &  
the interested~~

the adipose  
mask

83-26

THE MYTH OF THE GENTLE ENDOMORPH

To be fat is to be jovial,  
physically inept,  
and harmless.

With so few defenses  
you begin your fatty build-up  
of self-effacing polish  
glossing over anger.

Grabbing a handle-ful  
you feel you could rip it off  
leaving you bony;  
absolved of all pliancy.

Once you starve the mask of adipose  
to the sinews of the truth,  
what will be your protection?

4/19/83

AN OREXIS

A magic mushroom circle of craving  
hides from view  
(NO PUBLIC EATING)  
in gorged solitude.

Pinching, pressing, prodding,  
in instant expectation  
of metamorphosis  
to fat.

And after exercise  
that machine--  
knobby tempter:  
2 LARGE GRANOLA COOKIES  
it smiles  
just at me  
in the lobby as I leave.

Energy consumption  
as counter-compulsion  
out of fear  
for each sit-up less  
one ounce more.

Living  
for those moments  
unconscious of body  
taking me out of bounds.

3/24/83

83-18

VISITING HOURS

I'm sitting there thinking with an empty glass,  
no misplaced modifier, about your laugh and if  
the neighbors hear and if so why they don't  
complain.

And I'm thinking wine-loosened that I now have proof  
that all the muscles in your body  
haven't yet atrophied or dissolved in fat when  
I see your belly contract under the T-shirt  
as you laugh into the phone.

Then all I can see is the crutch top  
digging in and a cataract of flesh giggling  
at me with you and I want to go home now  
even if I have to walk in the rain I hear on the windows  
behind me.

I gulp at the quantities of food involved  
in supporting such bulk and it gnaws at me  
to see the food eat you more than you it  
and yet I steer the talk in edible directions still  
unable to ignore the topic  
any more than your fat.

3/11/83

Sex

83-39

BARE BONES

"...in the steadiness of that gaze:  
he made me more naked than without  
clothes..." -- Robert Gluck,  
Elements of a Coffee Service.

My face wore, he said,  
that look  
that too-good-to-be-real look.

I admitted to being unused  
to treatment so warm  
as well as post-orgasmic.

His confidence  
assured my lines,  
my graceful bow-outs,  
into innocent amnesia  
bereft of experience  
as I remembered  
the length of time  
since last relation  
of this kind.

We moved from bed to shower,  
to steam to pool to shower  
to flushed unsureness  
as to future meetings  
and the exchange  
of numbers.

In this community  
of the sex-numbered  
such astuteness and ability  
to read me through my covers  
alarmed me  
and excited me  
in equal measure.

9/25/83

12

83-35

PUNK

A muzzy thatch is perched  
parched atop a head  
spent from beating pillows  
into submission all night.

Thus lay my last Mohican  
resting from his wardance,  
unpainted and decostumed,  
whiter than under bellies.

Initiated into tribal rites,  
I stare upon the real boy  
and blink at rough conceits  
chained and studded in desire.

Youth has welded ego  
to dreams of wildest anarchy  
as its only weapon in the war  
with green frustration.

I am the Wild Boys' plaything.  
I am the mild boys' envy.  
I am this bad boy's dream.

9/10/83

13

83-33

PROPER

I caught you staring in time  
to return the dropped hankie  
of your intent  
only to have you become  
prim again, in business suit  
at luncheon.

7/15/83

14

83-11

BODY WORK

Something in lines  
that curve muscular  
drives me  
to that point  
where reference  
to the mundane  
is lost  
and I am ready  
to obey  
call or whim  
that might inflict  
itself on me.

> Lines that define  
the words in flesh  
hard as consonants  
outlining tits  
cleaving to ripples  
that end in brush  
where pride stands erect.

Anointed with oil  
in slippery sainthood;  
a bicep-tricep trinity  
I beg to be seeded  
and in some assumption  
pass Mary enroute  
to bliss  
in care of  
your fatal physique.

2/24/83

15

TRANSPORT

He took me  
while sleeping  
imperfect  
to places  
unseeing  
in darkness  
my heaven  
appeared.

I shuddered  
awaking  
to firmness  
of body  
and warmth  
undertaking  
to be my  
release.

We coupled  
in daylight  
with dew-sweat  
abounding  
enjoining  
our fragile  
yet driven  
desire.

And after  
as sitting  
in silent  
re-entry  
with smiles  
at our fingers  
swore death  
to our past.

2/19/83

83-47

MISCONCEIVED

He'll be fat and balding  
with sour breath  
and sweaty palms.

He'll want some trip  
no one else will give him,  
at least, not for free.

And I'll need my very best,  
my very hottest fantasy  
to keep me hard.

But when he arrives  
he's average; he's frightened,  
and he's lonely as death.

He wants nothing special.  
He wants to look at me.  
His need is like suction.

I take the money first  
while distracting him  
to maintain the pretense.

He comes quickly, frantically,  
and for a second  
he believes.

82-05

Y

hairless hunk,  
slick-sweat, spit dick,  
split-ass  
workout wonder  
raunch-ripler.  
be that strong hand I need  
and hold my sex.

8/27/82

18

IK!  
↓

~~Day-to-day~~  
eye to eye

83-06

APPLICATION

Speak, he said, and it was recorded that everything was secret. That the public had no right. That this was on the record. That I was honor-bound.

And speak I did, for that interrogation in private in his room. In poising each word like dancing, in feeling for what I felt he'd like to hear, I slowly filled the reel.

But as that smoke-curved lip lifted to sneer a smile at me, I felt confident of failure; positive of doom; sure of some omission or commission as my sin.

This interview is over, he said with pointed tone of voice revealing no trace or indication of my failure or my pass. We'll call you and Thank you.

2/8/83

19

83-07

WEST AFRICA

Your parents call you  
Jefferey.  
But to satisfy  
kinship yearnings  
for roots  
unsullied  
by the white man:  
Legal, rightful, willful,  
you are now Ajamu.

You claim a heritage  
without kwashiorkor, tse-tse,  
yaws, and the rest.  
Couscous in the Cuisinart?

Constructed commonalities,  
and familial fantasies  
delude.

Shall I then be Boris,  
and live on beets  
and bodka  
to prove  
what:  
my homeland?

Dignity is its own geography.

2/15/83

20

83-41

GRAFFITI ON POTRERO

"Resist God" is on the wall.  
I see some guerilla band  
in Che Guevara drag  
in league against the tyrant,  
immoveable object--  
a foe they've never seen.

Resist the concept or the fact?  
Resist exacted moral tribute?  
Resist some foul control?  
Or just a point to rally round  
"Vive la Resistance!".

Lead not to temptation  
the we might yet be saved  
by boys in comouflage fatigue  
by device or some construction  
outside the one called Man.

10/1/83

21

83-40

TRANCE AND DANCE

"But if they knew you shoot yourself-  
a beast- you shoot yourself--just private  
fascination." -- Cabaret Voltaire.

Gaze fixed sharply  
to precious bead  
on bevel of stainless steel,  
you contemplate  
which favorite track  
to play  
in private entertainment.

Jealous of this moment  
you guard the secret well;  
your blind ecstatic vision  
of God and life and angels  
who never need to land.

The song plays  
the needle dulls  
the sound decays  
to fuzzy indistinctness  
as fascination turns  
to frenzy;  
injection to dejection,  
and Patmos fades from view.

9/30/83

22

83-29

EYE TO EYE

When you spoke to me of Girtie's Gorgeous Gash,  
some alienate, Italianate thing, I could not grasp it  
or your desire, self-fed automaton of greed  
unheeding not needful of reinforcement by me.

Blood of the eccumenical rose to a head  
to beat understanding into it, my calm belying  
lying beneath, I saw seeing nothing--  
the heart of difference.

6/9/83

23

GAY PRIDE

Watching the night's god go pure  
in daylight  
slipping in a stream  
of consciousness  
slimey stones submerged,  
I poised pivotal  
a grey demesne  
of the pre-caffeine state.

In homo-relativity,  
comonalities,  
beyond the obvious need  
for gratuity as sex,  
where we see  
gland-to-gland--  
are not easily found.

So, as God sits  
in right relation to the world,  
where do we find  
common ground--  
    "she sit by sea-side  
    sifting sand"  
looking for grains that match.

Desire is our abundance  
exported to the needy,  
marketed domestically,  
promoted and packaged,  
with uniform consistency  
and purity of party line.

What we recognize  
in one another  
is that droning undercurrent  
that allows us  
the luxury of effortless  
auto mated erotic  
relation  
with no social  
work to be done.



83-32

UNDERCOVER

When habit fails you, indifferent  
patterns with oily reality slide  
away underpinnings to reveal  
underpinnings of grim dissatisfaction.

When disruption breaks the chain  
of commonplace events  
in their dutiful procession  
to the altar of evasinary  
tactics, your discomfort sets  
gods up less concerned with order.

Repeat to repent is the chorus  
of repair, as time is strapped  
back to wrist and the lullaby cycle  
of songs continues.

7/12/83

26

83-31 7

WHAT YOU HAVE GIVEN

I insisted on taking  
that step with you  
into dangerous vagueness,  
losing ourselves  
to each other.

Instilled with a sense  
of needing more  
and of taking less,  
I came to you  
like unleavened dough.

I paddled quickly  
to fill in gaps,  
streams now swollen  
to joyous bursting  
of old frontiers.

I now have to pause  
to see the strides  
we take together--  
baby-step continuous  
as we advance.

Our book of changes  
compiles itself slowly  
with the broken  
and the solid  
and love between the lines.

6/30/83

27  
K6

The recondite

OR

EVENT - HORIZONS

93-43

EQUINOX

Lines of demarcation:  
the moving line of dawn  
the moving finger writing  
Lines of direction:  
a rigid guide  
a rule of thumb  
Lines of perspective:  
to allow latitude  
to deny horizons  
Lines extrapolated:  
the Maginot premise  
the Ideal pursued  
Crossed lines in crucifixion.  
Lines manipulated,  
ignorant of intent.  
Poetic lines pointing  
to the given space between.

10/7/83

28

83-28

TODESWUNSCHTRAUM

or

CHRONICLES OF A DEATH RETOLD

For Ian Curtis.

Listening to songs on tape  
of a man now dead by suicide  
I tapped some strange memento mori  
of a life contained  
by morbid lyric  
come to save me  
turning madness into method--  
methodology.

Voracious songs  
with grapple hooks extended  
pulling the unwary  
into the swell and syntax  
of a voice with being  
and demonology.

Tod. Tod. The leit-motif  
draws the traveller  
down funneled arteries  
to event horizon dissolution  
of purpose and perspective  
where he breaks water  
filling different lungs.

The seduction of wishes of endings  
like Endkampf callings  
is resisted by the waking  
to death as a life to be lived.

God's perfect messengers are not.

5/14/83

29

83-45

SINGULARITY

What if you shone a flashlight  
and the light came back at you  
in a V-turn  
of knife sharpness?

A star beginning its collapse  
gathering its skirts around  
its core being  
introspective.

Could Narcissus in trance  
have warped a world as well  
as a star's old age  
concentration?

Radiation is swallowed  
indiscriminantly well  
by this weighty gourmand.

No whirlpool water model  
can imitate voracious  
black hole hunger  
feeding itself.

Chromatic nihilism.  
Reflexive geometry.  
The funnel drain,  
gravimetric.

God's gateway to tomorrow  
framed in flux of light's absence:  
the wedding ring;  
the singularity.

Why attempt escape  
from love's lightless nexus  
with the power  
to transform all?

When you called out in the March gale  
and the words were stuffed back down  
your gasping throat  
that was one thing.

We continue to ignore  
the power of perspective  
in our lust for green grass  
and the unspoiled pasture,  
dungless in its purity.

83-44

ASSUMPTION

Seven seas and four winds  
bring three fates:  
These numbers are classic.  
Ten fingers with two rings  
and no marriage:  
These numbers are real.

Our pages, numbered by ages,  
riffle,  
cartooning our figures  
to dance like St. Vitus  
in cruel animation--  
Anima; Animus; Animal.

Manipulated cards;  
the sleight of the cheat's  
digital magic  
passes our time,  
if not understanding.

The calculation of ways  
to spell out exit  
in a Codex of numbers  
only I understand  
so that none can follow  
possesses me--  
each slicing passage  
of the pendulum's swinging  
brings a regression of points  
where the decimal is lost  
in the Fun House mirror  
of my distant sight.

No one's eyes are bigger  
than that stomach.

10/9/83

31

83-38

BOXES

Soft muted blues and greys,  
sky colors,  
grace the cabin  
as in dim movie light  
the nun watches "War Games"  
with headphones over habit.

The lavatory boxes on the 767  
are Teflon coated  
dry  
refusing to wet while beading  
my liquid waste away.

I remark on the withdrawal  
of my person/personality  
into its Japanese picnic box  
nested and fitted  
compartments snug  
against one another  
containerized  
-tako, maguro, tamago-  
in nori bondage  
on sticky rice  
where economy  
meets secrecy  
under stark black lacquer.

I wrote a check once,  
the provided envelope saying:  
"Attention: Lock Box 63".  
I could see the Brinks guard  
initiate my payment  
with ceremony.

I have a strongbox  
where all I value lies  
with all I fear and know and feel!

9/25/83

32

ALONE AT NOON

*Fixed,  
not  
reprinted*

Haze-thick sunlight  
glazes the field.  
▷ Grass and shoulder  
blades meet, touching  
through fabric weave.

No insect, no  
bird-cry or tear  
is heard:  
baking to  
dryness and hatred.

Crusty-cheeked boy  
in love with a promise  
that the lonely  
vacuum stillness  
has purpose and  
ending.

~~1/27/83~~