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A SEASON

This country is a burning fire
all the trees and the day

Our way runs through colors
we can only point and smile

at what falls down and strikes us
flows over us leaves in air

in us love turns from each other
and goes back to its source

and seasons flow backwards
in winds from some southern coast

but it is here bread uneaten
left by some necessity by the road

Another seeding inside you
the will drives to another center

where we close and turn
intro darkness and turn

where something grows strangely
we think of it as a garden in sun

where the light is all gold
on green and flowers are strobes

and yes we can not go back there
and roll grassily children

something bluntly charges
into darkness and leaves its shape

Surely today in her coins
the gypsy has a new knowledge

We can't find a name for our sorrow

You turn and go away and I watch

watch fall crows rise hundreds
spread and merge in into the dark.

ACT OF LOVE

like Chandidasa
a touchstone, threaded
you wear upon your throat

in the act of love
The tinkling bells which decorate her hips
sound the triumphal music of the god of love
our deliberate union
all we know in the act the moon
and sun in the
outstretched arch your
mouth an offering of moan

in the waterfall pool
two trout hold still
their heads in crystal waves
of unbound hair

APOCRYPHA

Bait made of tin let's say
to bring us wolves
is what we've got

and after years
turn our dull eyes
slack to left right

knowing we wait
in the wrong
wilderness

They are sending
a steel fox with a bellows

we learn fierceness
from fire

BROKEN SURFACES

The rain begins in bits
no bigger than stars at night.

It would take a million
to make a mouth full.

We walk around the lake
another edge
between us we try
to speak around it

In the heavy air
minnows skitter half-in
half-out. Every word
falls into one

memory. On the rocking pier
we stammer simplest things

fall mute frogs
silent wait out the storm
one hand on the pillar

FIRST SONG FOR THE BEAUTY WAY BLESSING

--Spring Equinox

Asking Permission at FrogFarm

Green words ho!
washed clear the mind to the sun
put the firebird on my throat and
tied hair back with raw yarn
in the stone where the Diegueno pounded acorns
we grind corn

On the great rock corn for your power
in the beauty of granite
the way you hold together

North to the mountain with springs
corn for your living water
for quartz and garnet that slowly grow
in beauty. Here I said beauty
now I say it.

South to the green valley
corn for your way the beauty
of oak trees all the living things
in the wisdom of the south way.

West to the place between the great knees
of stone mountains where the sun goes
received to the ocean corn for that beauty way
she lets you go now north for spring to come.

East to the sun where you are now
corn for your rising-up strength
beauty of the day that comes
with all animals and plants
who look east now for their strength
here I said beauty now I say it.

And walk to the garden and say teach me
how it goes green leaves shaped like seeds
find your beauty way now
corn at four corners and the open gate.

Path with flowers yellow and blue
corn for your beauty way
a thousand perfections for attention

Corn to birdsong and animals moving
but not seen in the chaparral
moss and rapid insects trees
that lie down and show how they were made
here I said beauty now I say it.

Corn for the pool where the water falls
from rocks clear as beauty with roots
down where they come to drink.

House for going in at night
corn for the big trees
that protect this house
oak trees growing in the beauty way.
Corn for each corner and door to door
friends to come in the beauty way.

here
I said beauty now I say it
house full of beauty children who were here
what we come to know in this place
love to be. And come for the fireplace
in the center for the food cooked
for the things the fire shows us
in the beauty way.

Firebird on my throat speaks green words
mind of spring come
washed clear in the beauty way.

FOR THE MOCKINGBIRD BIRD TO SAY

now night grows
into the past midnight
mockingbird
singing

in the sleek musk heat
we move apart
all our parts
glazed like sugar

You sleep while
i am waiting
for the cold to grow

the open window
lets in night noises

the yellow blanket
is dark

somewhere
in the Sangre de Cristo mountains
a woman flattens her hand
over the sheepskin over them
in that fast thin air

We are gifted
together

knowing that
neither of us said
the words of love

FURNISHING THE HOUSE

where water wedged wood
against the flooded trees
I burrow and scatter:

a piece to serve
as chaise lounge
one for a kitchen block

one that will shed its years
in thin dry layers
a hard slab to carve
this warning:

Thousands of frogs on the move,
at night, all leaping west
into a dark high wind. . .

GENERATIONS

My sons begin to wander
through my dreams and the poems
eating licorice
and prying curiously at things.

My daughter stands a little back
an early candidate for wound and
wisdom one arm behind her waist
bribing the world with her grin
that closes her eyes and holds it in.

The younger son wakes up choking
from his mouth I rake out a slice
of heart-meat rosy on the edges
a cabalistic meal
he swears he didn't take.

The first son in front of me
on the little horse and when
my father gets on as well
we make it back to the spring,
I don't see now — even its liver burst
when it collapsed crushing John.

I carry him to the place
and set the fireworks off early
so he can see O he
who carried the eagle-daemon
that lived in a horse.

And my girl! sitting in a small
road of shade in the high desert
intently stroking the dewlap
of a horned toad.

IF THE DREAMER

1. Place of Emergence

Once we were in it
 (now we are not
 they say

Like the Shaliko
naked first to themselves
as gods masked
to the diurnal turning
wavering to the dawn
ten feet tall men

coming out of winter
born of night
split open by drums
by silence by a throb
of earth

that turns out creatures
men/seasons/all
rising across the river

coming to us
who stamp our feet with cold
 (then forget that
 in this dream

IF THE DREAMER

2 . The Dream

If the dreamer were a seer
he would know beginnings
 how to give thanks speak of death
 songs would go straight to gods
This voice is next door
a tall woman who is drunk

could tell which airplane will crash

I love fly-
ing and am afraid
but with
how deep I dare to go
to invent (invenire)
equals to find: Jung
jungle "the word itself hints
what you are going to find," equals
complicated destruction

The language strips away defenses
There
is death destruction goes on
I cannot help you:
cannot help myself

The voice does not come again
(bright in the dark) gone
to make love dark sleep

3. Act

Smoking myself:
fan the smoke
into the loins
armpits stomach
Power of spirit
of the tree burning

Come Grandfather come
to me light
the breath of the mother
cure me
of being only human

waftbeat of feathers
rising to sun
flafrattle
flafrattle
a prayer of smoke

We do this even who
have not earned feathers
motion smoke to us

with our dreaming
hands

O sing again Water Maiden:
your *mana* voice is ten
is one thousand-and-one
from the beams above us

IN HERE

what the world comes to
fabricate

to make the match bum
on a single stroke

ah stroke
the fish on a line

stroke love
stroke bone

what mystery matters, THAT
is what we want to know:

the length of the line
does not say
my father is 70 years old/ it

comes to this

he could make
a child/ wedge a stone/
make my brother cry

fire
dark rivers
come into me

THE LUSTY FLOWER

She curls on the mountain
surrounded by wild buckwheat
turned October rustred

her thoughts
are the thoughts of animals

unknown shapes and size
move under manzanita
on loose oak leaves

She makes agreements
with the season's last bee
butterflies gone mad
on a final blaze of yellow

Those pale little flowers
of March and April exploded
purple follows
these hard red berries
golden yarrow thick syrup
high up

She minded light at sunrise
on clouds that moved
a bright lake in the valley

it lifts in the heat
in silence
a blanket closes on us
the sun goes grey

She voices goldtipped words
"I was waiting for you"
to mouth fall air's white liquid
velvet moss sweet green the
thinned sun "the continual
song that runs through walls"

A story they tell
in lonely places

who's in the house together
when the first fog rolls in
must spend the winter

MAKING LOVE WITH THE WIND

A turtle dove warbles
and waits

hearing something I can't
dives off to another tree

something moves something
stays. My lady
do you hear the steady
honey sound of insects
in the sun

the sky opens its arms
says "look at me!" and you
do lying back lazy bare
in the sun days and days
can go by

 This day after staring
at your brown body
all the early afternoon
the storm gathers blue muscles
comes over you darkly
shouts A-HEY! A-HEY!

the first wind moves
the top of trees
gentle

water
in the lake beside us
is happy to rise

we go something stays
this is not the last time
but closer to that
than the first.

MANZANITA CIRCLE

Under branches old-apple brown
we tunneled in on knees on animal trails
 fell springcubs on wrestling ground
 drank wine, ate jerked beef, bread
(sun warm on us here)

Your motions mock the grace: distant trees
 undulate mountains
When you move out of your clothes
you become the object and eye of hills
 those
 these
 lifetimes of preparation:

Nothing is forgotten in the grand order

I tremble to find you again
across all that time
they would have been waiting for us
 (had always been your lover
 even when I didn't know it)
We lie in the center
of all those lives

Heat and cool your body and shade—
manzanita blossoms falling down on you

Holding our hands out together to the sun:
 Talk with that fire, the stars beyond it
 Talk with the wind
like other small animals who have sunned here

MINOTAUR

I look for a room
in this house
in the center of the forest

All the rooms are open
each time she goes into one
all the dogs stop barking
On the clean sheets of the beds
scattered letters of instruction

In the center garden
with olive trees and roses
a single horse looks at us
his long head cocked

Sheep and dogs bleat
at the old woman there
working silently the beehives
Her drunkard husband
is never at home

For years he has ridden
blindly the forest trails
his rifle tied on his back
with a cord of yellowed yarn

Rain on the fields
fire in the oven
after the rain mist
rising through white daisies

the way it falls back
into white folds
delights me beyond reason

I want a room
in this house
in the center of the forest

I take my blankets
up into the hunting tower

lay my sights down
on a minotaur
with one twisted horn

TOKENED DAYS

folly ah folly when we hope.
For more than blurred gray behind eyes
to count for tokened days.

where have the places got to
where fade the spent short days?

Folly, where do gashed cashier's strips
receipts for days I spent
weave papered webs?

what wilderness have I paid for bartering
what lion's-tooth trophies I had

OFFERING

Snake come to offer your power I apologize
you were strong and beautiful

That was an old stone
from beside your granite lair
that hit you

Was it true I lost my inner sister
in the night ceremony
among many moving people

So I have your place now
But the others of fine senses
and your mate out there
don't know why you did it

I put on my snake dancer amulet
and protection hear them
slide in the darkness further back

I clear everything not necessary
off the table and wash you
yellowish brown white-tipped scales
in single triangles six apart
At the tail five black
four white bands seven rattles

You are long as myself from the neck
big as a bicep with no bulge
of food triangularly flat-bottomed

I'm sorry for your broken-off fang
o winter-fasted fish
o strong and beautiful sensor
come from thousands of years
with armor I sharpen my knife
for this work full of care

PASSAGE IN SHADES OF WHITE

Ash falls off
incense
how it is fragile
odorous subject to
gravity

Ten days ago
these six white roses
opened to a full moon

I keep them
brown and splayed

Where are the wisdoms I
grew a vessel
holds its walls

We get a chance
someone might fill
our unfillable
amphora and we start
to love

A grey dog howls
third time tonight
and the moon I know
rises later

Mysterious closing
the great white owl's wings fold
to its body

A PLACE ON THE WAY

I am stopped by a small light
 through a space between stones
chanting in the early night
 The old woman beckons me in
 to come closer

The priest stands tall in his robes his
 young face grows a white beard he
chants his own response he
 returns through curtains swings
incense vigorous on a chain crying out
 over fire in a holder of round bread
unknown words in smoke

 The old women in black
 gather silently to
the voice the circle of fire
A burning in this place

He turns from preparing us

The dark woman puts out the priest's fire
 offers the bread
outside girls are drawing water
 coils of old rope a deep well

In Olinthos ruined church
I light a candle for you it is myself
burning in silence
 after my words

SECOND SONG FOR THE BEAUTY WAY

May you walk in beauty here
This earth is seeded with tiny garnet
Walk in beauty here

May you walk softly here
Explosions go everywhere
this ground is full of moss-green splays
the rapid persistent chaparral
quartz spreading starred fingers
burdock unfolding out from its center
tiny flowers explode in a day walk softly

May you walk in delight here
this ground is home for many animals
who live calm between fear and ecstasy
catching and eating the rabbit suns himself
on the rock in late afternoon calmly walk
Name yourself quail skunk snake squirrel deer
mice with long tail and big ears
walk with animal delight here

In power here coyotes celebrate every sunset
may your senses walk here voicings of
bird and frog same as you and me and look
with the crow's yellow eye who came today
hawking and whistling to see about a man
who promised to feed him on the mountaintop
Walk in your full power here

In May you walk with attention for the beauty way
This place lived many Dieguenes of dignity
In the rocks here they ground acorns
in nine circles that catch the sun
They had joy and made love in this place
with big trees and water black soil and many animals
This place teaches Walk with attention here
in the beauty way

SONG COMING

the Road Man's place is empty.
I begin to sing Hey-Way HEY-WAH
HAH-WAH begin to catch the edge
song with blue cedar smoke

Prayer for her empty falling her falling
the place in the middle HO
for his desire "a vision of spaces"
somebody help such a foolish man HUUH

THE LIGHT TONGUES EAGLES IN AN AERIE
SCREAMING A CIRCLE OF SOFT YELLOWS UP

I rock to east and west
the smell of sage
comes down to an empty center
HAH-NAH HAH-NAH Hayah Hahayah

Green rills where the earth broke
glaze the pinion resin incense balls
that lie like marbles
under the trees
in the hills wind
for every needle
even the red flame in my mind
whips to the side HEY-WAY
HAH-WAH NEY-WAY NEY-WAY NAH-WAH

Stone steps spiral to the blindstory
the tops of our painted vaults
are rough heaps of rocks

THE MOVING SUN SHOOTHS THE UNDERSIDE
of everything. Teaches us how to do it.

morning it shuttles livid
through the orange weft HO
carded through winter apple trees
NEY-WAH NEY-WAY I wait for my song
morning ho

SONG FOR A JOINING VISION

*"the grandfathers help pull me through the flame
you can take it up all around you and have it to use"*
--A Water Maiden's Vision

The sun rises: it is a mystery in ourselves
light is born from sight
sight is light
The sun rises: it is a mystery in ourselves

We travel through a hole in the fire
We are joined by those behind us, shapes
we join
we join
we join our grandparents
We line up with them behind us
We are standing in their place now
We are standing in their place now

We are with them, for that, thanks
We are with them, for that, thanks

We have to do the work now
for that, thanks for their help
We have to do the work now
for that, thanks for their help

They have given us sight of them,
for that sight, thanks
They have given us sight of them,
for that sight, thanks

We are standing with them, that is a gift for us
and for that, thanks
We are standing with them, that is a gift for us
and for that, thanks

Ho! the sun's rays come to us in rainbows,
in all colors that we see here;
The colors are falling from the sun,
It falls forever and it does not fall,
a thousand years stopping with our heads raised.

We all of us one race living now
We the same as our great-grandfathers

We join in the rainbow of sun rise
We greet our grandparents in the halo

We make voice to remind us of mystery

THE HEALING

The largest extant crow
comes primaries stretched
fingering the warm air
kraa-ing kraa the sun

above him the smell of copper
in his call. He comes again
again not really watching me

burning old calices and
rotten wood for spring.

When such a bird comes
When such a bird speaks
turns the air to turquoise

he hazes the sun out
behind no visible clouds
turning the black wheel of attention
on his poised inside wing.

When such a bird comes
When such a bird speaks

Crows themselves flame up
spontaneous into dark torches
to cauterize our burning eyes.

THE SUNSET BECOMES A BURNING TEMPLE, PULSES LIGHT

--Leave-taking poem for Larry Shaefer

*"When the sun is set, and the moon is set, and the
fire has gone out, and speech is hushed, what then
is the light of man?" Upanishads*

Come ceremonial need-fire/wood
ritual matter has grown cold my
father's yearly festival with earth is lost

we would
put our hands on old rhythms move
toward another season

Put the firestick now to the forehead
draw the smoke into the mind
blow it to earth to wind
to midnight water

In the night I tremble knees and elbows
and forehead on the floor
there is no single wisdom
your stomach heaves
as if it could empty you of pain

you suffer defeat/ she cries out from darkness
we are totally defeated it belongs to
no particular thing it all comes in
we can die without purpose
we answer love with selfishness I
don't know how to help you
"we are weak and poor
we don't know anything"

Ourselves charged how else should you learn
"fire-boring" rhythmic motions
spiritual feeding from breasts the
woman sobbing in the candled dark

We discover ritual it gives form
to our suffering it remembers

what we are who would forget our humility
shapes to a waiting bowl

Then as it happens just before dawn
she brings into this house earth
you bring the bowl for fire

We speak of suffering
we thus make fire with our mouths

THE TRANSFORMATION

The form in which it appears
necessarily clings to it.

To feel this a
conversion to form
 Way to make knowing
possible.

 To take the name of ancestors
to eat totem meals
 Not enough.
 The other being.

I am flying
 become distracted talking to my brother
 lose control
 we crash on the mountain
 walk out among the trees
 together

I am riding a black horse up the water ditch
 I begin talking to the horse and find him wise
 as we go through golden tall grass
 he becomes a tall young man
 At the edge of the field we make love
 the raccoon and deer watching
 and I discover she is a woman

UNTITLED

This vision depended on its motto
to give dignity to the animals--
there were to be three of them
whose occupation until now had been
to crack stinking bones from trash cans
and skulk through moonless nights;

now one of them glowers in the shadows
of old alley sheds
eyes a wanting of stars
gone to the black
pooled behind everything

because of me guilty by reason
of forgetting the first detail
he is a laser of anger lacking a name
to bring him out of the darkness.

On his muzzle hoarfrost of light
this one who whispers in snarl,

while the other two crouch down
and wait under the dream's dark blanket.

WALKING: SPRING IS FOUR WAYS

1.

Walked down
expecting a path leading to a stream
but the hillside only fell on

It is simply some random place
in the middle of a forest
I have come to alone

Found a hardwood stick
leaning against a tree
its top already polished

II.

Here is
bumblebee's investigation
the beat of an invisible bird
the whistle as its big wings
batter through branches no that was a
California spring a year has passed

not paying attention
I walk barelegged into nettles

III.

Brown ants swarm in the old stumps
leathery fungus eats from the sides

May strawberry blossoms so many
I can't help but walk some down

IV.

i am tracking a dove throb in afternoon
walk on old leafheaps and rootswells

i wait in a spot in the sun
the dove comes closer and closer
a tree at a time
and at last drops a message i can't find

i move out of my clothes

i am here for the sun after all
to meet a lover
to find a place

WHAT WANTS TO GROW

After a full moon came
after predicted clear sun tomorrow
a torch of lightning over Mesa Grande
a night flood coming down-mountain

two ranges lit in shades by the furious moon
by the struggling moon In rain rain I
eat the smell of wet rocks and white sage
water pouring off the cedar roof

glad for the inside fire back there
made from a crotch of oak with three limbs
that slowly split away in serious love

who reminds me how we love our teacher
and forget how we learn and forget

The fire is down rats are fucking
under the floorboards twittering and shrieking
like birds Next will come a pounding at the door

Owl whoop and coyote scramble where are you
in the rain tonight? My prostate pulses
with crying-outs under a new moon owls
seducing in two tones where are you?

And who rides beside me slowly the saddle
rises, we lope on a trail through chaparral
and come here seduced by a myth
in the seventh month of fearing

But back with the full moon and the rain
I sit rocking on my knees in pleasure
at far thunder its get runs from the roof
I piss on the streaming patio stones
and let the rain take it away to the roots
of whatever wants to grow here