

Versuche: 21

**Furniture Music**  
[c. 1995-96]



## The Platform

The girls with those Djuna Barnes hats  
barely notice the Czech accordion player,  
and I don't notice them, either  
we're all so enraptured with our redirects,  
self regards, personal exertions  
on the subway platform that is like a mental gymnasium,  
(we got those cards to prove our membership,  
lifetime renewable, in fact, so you can't  
complain – this is “compassionate” modernism  
just coming in to save the day when you'd lost  
all hope,  
withering like a bean pod on the vine)  
– it's like that when it's winter in the city,  
the cabs and streets steam, like the  
Clydesdales in the beer commercials, making  
a funky pastoral in this ne'er-do-wellness setting.

Someone will complain of the bombs  
perched in the national commonplaces about marriage,  
taxes, the environment, even the First Dog  
who craps on command just off the *mise-en-scène*  
of Diane Sawyer's shrink-wrapped visage,  
the soybean substitute of the family Christmas  
in which sleeping pills, the old-fashioned, Fifties kind  
are the only dream of escape  
on a lumpy mattress, in a hovel in Shanghai  
draping the company jacket over the spare, naked light bulb,  
praying for sleep,  
the rusty buckets of coughing and laughter invading  
like a “dull tom-tom” only this time, it's real parody.

The stunt doubles never arrive on time, nor are  
the bagels ever as fresh as in “the city,”  
they pop in the microwave, for instance, and generally  
make fools of themselves, as only bagels can.  
But “compassionate modernism” promises more than this,  
and does, pleads like the innocent snowflake  
braving winter winds to land on your tongue,  
which is in fact sentimental, but indeed is all you've got.

## **Mon Triste Coeur**

*after Rimbaud*

My sad heart bathes in the poop,  
their jeerings (poems) have remade it.  
Now it's no more. Loop de loop,  
having spelled it, they denude it.  
Their jeerings (poems) have remade it  
into something of chicken soup,  
into something hotly debated.

My sad heart bathes in the poop.  
Their jeerings (poems) have remade it.  
Now it's no more. "Loop de loop,"  
having spelled it, they denude it.  
Their jeerings (poems) have remade it  
into something of Wednesday's soup,  
into something not hotly debated.

## The Chord

The chord barely reaches; the telephone's a prick,  
searching for the rhythm of this night, foul with impatience,  
grand with discomfort; isolated, so alone; a barometer,

no, but a bowel; shatter therapeutic glasses and five irons;  
bled, histrionics, blasphemy, delightful catalogue,  
insensate in America, a barn door opens onto the night;

angels of Ginsberg, angels of Blake, none other;  
shivering, it is cold (orphanage), escaping the tropes,  
it is cold, speechless, leaps the fence into the neighbor's yard

and pisses, no leaps again, finds that image of her (can't remember  
her name); all the way outside of New Jersey, all the way;  
the margins, the coal mine, the strip mine, it comes

regularly into speech, conversation is excitable;  
illegal, the Puritan dawn creates its substitutes for  
penance, work in the office; no form, only juggling

incisors snarl like the "ancestors... clumsy with their firsts,"  
ha, so were mine, bleeding through their country in  
sneakers; takes a five iron to the Nissan, takes

another moment to recover and rediscover poetry, not the words  
nor the letters, not the verbs and nouns, not the misprints, no;  
running, another fence, spillt diamonds on the ground

he falls; that's satisfactory fiction, unblemished recollection;  
narcissist, beat off those angels, those Catholic nuns,  
the Huns at the border, the ones with the credit cards, the nuns;

block, hush, kick, snarl, rasp, hungry, towel off!  
abatement nothing for solace in the mire of heavenly predecessors  
who were, in fact, needy, mundane, lived in tight quarters, nothing

to recommend them; but they're ours, so the anthem  
goes, and forget about the whole rotten country it's a skitterbug,  
in June, it's a June bug, in July no different, wait

for the next month; the next mong is Christmas apathetic tastes,  
packaged with the family and the ubu roi and the girl from Mystic.

## **Another Day**

Another day in the city  
drowning yourself in Diet Pepsie  
(how's that, Dan Quayle?)  
being the pom-pom of your age,  
a tall lie in a sea of stalks  
(the grunions are molting),  
with memories of the Paleolithic  
(indeed, they make bad sleep).

The plaid masks the coax,  
the rude insistence hides the shy,  
as the Catherine wheel grows old  
and dark beneath punitive skies.

Partly sunny, southwest winds  
at 20 miles per hour, tomorrow  
to drag the satchel of books  
down the dirt highway to the school,  
– nothing tremendously Italian about it.

Largesse, it talks to you  
with mouthfuls of vices.

## Flight of the Yangban

Erupted from 70 counties  
with half a glass of champagne  
still teething  
with no myth of exactitude  
to get my Heidegger right  
I am the yangban  
cook-a-cooka-choo  
a Brooklyn paramour  
with an external diaphragm  
I picked up at Walmart  
they're making them cheap  
in Pullman, Illinois  
bed of progressives  
where the purebred live on souls  
of cheats, daisies  
for yangban who  
cares, in a yangban hat  
on TV, mother's video collection  
that I had to return  
every Sunday, NJ, circ. 1995  
most likely late,  
she'd watched all 70  
78 times  
(I think the Koreans are  
doing much better  
now, not so many  
tapes, a little more relaxed  
into the soil,  
even the lawnmowers seem an  
exotic music)  
who could be busy  
complaining, 2002, economy  
worse than Lindsay's  
when he started  
worse than the homily  
that raised the twin towers'  
a "boondoggle," though  
we miss them now, how  
ironic, and we miss  
Kenneth Koch, John Wieners

Larry Rivers, etc.  
New American Original Species  
they thought, we bought  
    into it, feeling  
part of it, America  
    not a yangban, but  
a cowboy, not an alien  
but a president, presiding  
    over an apartment  
we could hardly afford  
    only paying attention.



## Two Beasts

### 1. UAKARI

Princely vegetarian, though crimson  
as if vodka-flushed, suggesting a bypass  
operation's in order, the Uakari is  
(with principle agility, toes never hitting  
the forest floor) solitary in the topmost  
foliage of trees. Pink in captivity,  
as if determined to sit straight, fly right, conform,  
it deteriorates, intensifying  
any zoo's struggle to strap its load.

### 2. OXPECKER

Mellow in profit, this deft neck-dangler  
pecks at vermin, "hence its name"  
    (my 'card says, though one  
    wonders, indeed, how pestilent is the  
ox!), is propitiously decked with clauses,  
that double as arms, and eyes  
blind to danger. They lick nights' spew  
(secretions from the antelopes' and buffaloes'  
lids) for drink, and harbor hosts  
as favorites, returning each day, like vengeance  
to a carcass. Its nest has "big hair,"  
(wig-like, briefly stomached from mammalian  
interludes, o intoxicating strength!)  
stitched together to form the hearth's heart,  
dreamily. It "obviously feeds on  
ticks" – like rictal spasmodics? or like  
reticence? Does it paralyze one's defenses?

## **I'm Bound To Be**

polite  
a gentile  
over 20 years old  
part of Canada's misery  
letting food go to rot in my cupboard

a typist  
wildly overrated  
a natural born sleeper  
something the cat can't drag in  
author of several exclusive and inscrutable thoughts

improper  
humorless  
opaque to young people  
the father of my three sons  
the hero of several rigged disasters  
(you can sleep through this last one without feeling like you've missed anything)

it's hot as hell outside

## Poem

755 glorious trimesters later  
and the baby is struggling with its first  
insurance checks. Having written  
several autobiographical poems, she has  
already alienated her father, Rob... etc

She is standing on my door,  
comfortable in the sound of boscaje and wimps,  
terrier of the night, laughing  
her two dark bytes of colander, her torques:  
nested desire for frigid air, for ancillary quarks!

## Countering the Luddite Itch with a Tin Switch

*with lines from Thomas Carlyle*

Countering the luddite itch with a tin switch.  
Finessing the first kiss. Burning crosses.  
Did Kore earn the pinstripes? Did gyre and gamble in the wabe?  
Countering the techno fix with the thin stitch  
of a thimble prick. Let me tell you. Let me warn you:  
Lust never troubled me.

Happy men are full of the present,  
for its bounty suffices them;  
and wise men also,  
for its duties engage them.

Add a hyperlink. Bluntly. Bullock? Bollocks.  
But don't, don't blink. Blow it through the bull.  
Protection. Dissimulation. Footfalls.  
Green mayo in the soma. Red sores on the licks.

Even the horse is stripped of his harness,  
and finds a fleet fire-horse yoked in his stead.

Heckling.  
Hello hello.  
Hello. Honesty.  
I'm anemic. I'm anemic.  
I'm delinquent. I'm delinquent.  
I'm prostrate. I'm prostrate.  
I'm too fat. I'm too fat.  
It is a cavity. It opens.  
Words coming and going.  
Words loving and strolling.  
Writing like a cavity.

It was the boundless Invisible world  
that was laid bare in the imaginations  
of those men; and in its burning light,  
the visible shrunk as a scroll.

So few, and the chalk echoes and elides.

So many, didn't think that'd happen.

So what, countered the pop star in Lenin linens.  
She returns every evening. She returns. Shouting.

Maybe tomorrow.  
Maybe yesterday.  
Mercy.  
My lazy glands will never support me.  
My lazy glands will never support me.  
My lazy hands will never stop me.  
My lazy hands will never stop me.

Nay, we have an artist that hatches chickens by steam;  
the very brood-hen is to be superseded!

Did the flounder flounder, the bass bass?  
Don't fink, don't stink!  
Balance it on coins.  
Plummet it for Bill.  
Being out of necessity. Being unnecessary.  
Bettering this banter with news from Santa,  
buttering it up with puns from Butterick.  
Stamping.  
Surprise!  
Send it on the Steve.  
Blandly bunting. Blankets suggesting the progress of history.  
Blasé clowns. Blue spangled sneakers. Cancerous.  
(Cited cows. Coughing.)  
Besting, but not the best; and of the best: worst.  
Efficacious. Politesse with the finger bent. Professionals.

Accordingly, the Millenarians have come forth  
on the right hand, and the  
Millites on the left.

Reading silently to oneself.  
Reading silently to oneself.  
Reading silently to oneself.

And and.  
And, and? And, yes.

And.  
Send it to Gillot.  
Or hell you.  
Pliés.  
Wanking prevaricators.  
We wait for the door to open.  
Weeping consolations.

The French were the first to desert Metaphysics;  
and though they have lately affected  
to revive their school,  
it has yet no signs of vitality.

The Fifth-monarchy men prophesy from the Bible,  
and the Utilitarians from Bentham.

The Crusades took their rise in Religion;  
their visible object was, commercially-  
speaking, worth nothing.

The great Napster.  
The green napper.  
The Napstermeister.  
These words arm. These wounds am.  
Think and don't think.  
Turning up to claim to claim the prize.

Poetry professors professing the proofs of their own history.  
(What do you do? What I do.  
What do you do? What I do.  
What do I do? Very fine, thank you.  
What do I do? Very fine, thank you.)  
Chancrous.  
Professors of history.  
Professors of their own history.  
Purchase it for marquee.  
Purple bandages on sore arms.  
Perforations in the fabric suggesting the pogroms of history.

**“Take the Black Eye...”**

Take the black eye: winter's nerve  
twitches, all style and grace  
blanches, otherwise, fails to fist  
blowing from the horizon, or grasping  
bodies to it. The strength stark  
bounty, pricks plashing in redolence,  
puddles of imagery: so a cat  
dreams soundly in this burrow but  
not I. I tag this “sprocketed I” as  
strumming loudly inward, pieces  
piecemeal crowd, arguing several gifts  
against it; the puzzle barely fits  
the illustration: a crooning boy  
naked, knees buckling in the leg: high.

**“The parents take their tips...”**

The parents take their tips, but sleep with ires;  
a paper sailing ship sets out, then turns back  
its clock, and sinks; nothing in the battery  
prepared it for its dwarfish role. The time that  
is wasted is thrown into the fire, where it grows  
a face, with a harelip. Believing in such fires  
only stokes the energy, the choke, that holds  
the memory to its anchor, the forehead to destinies  
that are always unfulfilled, because so old.  
The body simply plummets, it is cramped and fares  
poorly in a basement, or pantry, when it's locked  
in patterns of the army, or television roles.  
Sleep can provide the issues, those one can tear  
easily from its staples; in wavering one is rocked.



Plums from the  
new style,  
    in neon  
follicle,  
branches,  
    splints  
domestic  
ardors that  
    seem *modern*,  
call it  
a sketch, un-  
    til then.

## Jaw

The little heavy jaw, but  
I'm by the window, so  
it seems quite healthy, here  
to be writing, just  
one step from playing tennis,  
    but true  
    to myself,  
I light up a cigarette, try  
for second wind  
attainment, sacrifice air  
where words would be, which  
I fear, more than, more than health  
    itself, what  
    could I  
have to gain from consciousness, from  
window and wind, from sound,  
but the call to sacrifice,  
finally, this attachment to body  
like in some Jackie Chan flick,  
    falling  
    but fighting.

## Scansion

I would respect your pygmy scansion, were it  
not all rain and weather: the drop down  
into atmospheric lows, skirting the city:  
blankets of mist over the cars and  
speech, nobody groins a howitzer: fabrications  
of myth in potato chips, lucky charms, the  
battle of the bulge:

and we are  
sailing  
on circuits  
of rime: cordons

keep the players off the grass, where the punks  
practice their inane dances of lethargy,  
the cops are unwilling, in this period of ethics, to  
stake their claims, which is to say the  
division of ratios protects the tangential queries  
from overrunning the boundaries: high fly-  
ing efforts at circumference are not welcome here:

strolling, it  
is the manner  
of the walk, turns  
the eye from its

deliverance.: the children run at hiccough pace:  
blah blah lover the runways from which they  
must propel their economies: oh, all unwilling!  
(O'Hara): but there should be a devil that is deeper than  
this, in the Dantescan universe: which we don't  
want: scrawling on the sundays our graffiti of commerce  
and magic, leisure is a syllabus: method is

controlled by  
interests of  
the state: don't  
know to much, don't verify

discord: so that the streets remain green all day, and  
no paradox comes unclean, no grumbling persists, in  
parks of balked odor: bringing the matter back to grass and  
properties: on them, we piss and shit: honor them  
and the rifle of the mind is loaded with its teeming pos-  
sibility (which makes for fecundity) so that, alas, one  
revels in the lack of transcendence: pornography of the trapped

Imagination:  
nation that waits  
politely: how  
true that deliverance.

## **Thanatos and Eros**

Thanatos and eros –

    bungee jumping from one to the other  
    or a dyslexic combine that throws in troves  
unequal but spirited poems;  
    these trysts of banging heads that smother  
    deliberations in the senates of hope  
    the flecks of eros  
vengeful of the thrones.

## **Elopement**

It was the sea that was lucky  
and not your mama.  
I've thought of invisible loves.  
Now I will confuse myself with regrets.

## **Furniture Music [1996/2016]**

1.

Weekends, I'm entrusted  
to myself, which is convenient;  
no other pasty faces  
lathering the windows, no.

My hips are scarred, as are  
my hopes. A curl  
in the centuries-long eyelash:  
broken down Swedish fop.

Make of this toiletry what  
you will, heroine, I'm game  
for that – for the others I won't  
speak, rather nod

off, as I'm doing now.  
Fax me images of mittens, I  
command, but my credit –  
what's with all these possessives?

Alas, Starbuck's is open.  
Did I mention Toulouse Lautrec?  
Of course (gingham asper  
flunk shlepp), not, not in my poem.

My electronic equipment  
dies, I can barely  
type any longer – used to be  
quite easy, flipping a lid  
and turning her  
on,  
noticing a rhythm  
ego as it spills forth –  
    lady with cocktails  
who has just published a book  
on the Postmodern Lyric.

All with a will

to hide –  
poem of crisis  
we'd ask you sluriously  
do we have  
to die?

And the crisis  
responds –  
with jackhammer  
grinding,  
with rubbled intent  
– that we read.

Rather than retire the question,  
perspire in the continued insurrection.

The doilies become custard.  
At last, Tonto, to begin again.



2.

How to wake, how to wake one  
with the specificity, and the damage  
controlling outside  
playing upon the unspecificity  
of being in “Plato’s Cave,” thoroughly convinced  
of the Immortals.  
Waiting for the poem to crack and Eternal Light  
rather than the emissions of amoebas –

He once said painting was “putting decorations, on a white rectangle.”  
My tense  
is to believe him, conversing  
somewhere outside of the rubber band  
with “gift economy”  
and a pressed red shirt  
suitable substitutions for authority  
with their red caps and black sashes.

Insense.

The primacy of Garamond type in the “thick journals,”  
one’s personal grammar becoming grids and other city plans.

3.

Is this what it's like to sleep  
in a pile of corpses?  
(Poetry is an afterthought.)  
I woke up because my dentures were dirty  
and all the thinking was like 1975.  
She was there. So was she.  
And she was there. We called her Gullible Madness.

The pose of the pulse in Soho  
makes my hair bristles breathe  
but that's before I was largely disabused  
of the inevitability  
(houses made of Saran Wrap)  
of the inevitability of death.  
I can't say I feel much better now.

When they had that hinge joint in the putter  
I was the star of a TV series  
secretly filmed in Toronto but claiming to be  
from Cleveland – why'd they do that?  
As the days grow longer, I become an emphatic 7.  
Civilization can go fuck me.  
I want to be a part of that outer fringe,

hiring a dog  
to chase linen.

4.

Some little pimple of hope  
on the expanse –  
green and pink advertising logos  
with names like “Jeffrey” or “Pam”  
consuming concentration.  
Where the bump ends, and the skin begins  
is academic.

Everything relies on the digital fix,  
mollusks speed across the surface –  
rubber trees spray their guerdon to the stars –  
when the  
trial commences –  
oh! then the seance around the bonfire!  
Can the cannibal never know the neighbor’s death throes?

One struggles for distinction – amidst the blowing turnstiles  
foot placed, one after the other, ahead  
into the continuing controversy  
of how we stay late, what sources provide the juice  
of the most jejune of our talentless cousins, our stoic, uninspired aunts,  
our teachers. Button one another up, that’s what we do.

So the children extend past our beseeching, anyway, starry-eyed with bare feet  
of the coals of winter’s stock exchanges, the  
obfuscating this-or-that of the talk show hosts with winking eyes (hey,  
that’s you with the crinoline bagpipes! captured on digital disk  
and never to be forgotten until the late-nineteenth century quest  
for closure corrodes) –  
I think that’s what she said. But in Lausanne, it was Gutenberg  
who framed the psychosis that, since, we’ve been swimming and losing  
our balance about. With our own standard companies driving the oral traditions  
to their graves,  
*belas*, there are the other phenomena to aspire to, the majors and minors  
of a day in the subway – the tracks and the laughs – all that is never considered.

The winding of the sentence used to be the pastime of aristocrats;  
now, in the violent earth, the sentence is total  
and so it must be short, sleek, inelastic, workman-like;  
or so they seem to suggest: it must be feminine,

despite the acres of piss and penises it contains,  
and must be somewhat approachable, like a building, though it's wet.  
The birth of tragedy out of song: what forms will surface from *our* Dionysian  
rituals?

5.

If I couldn't hear this sound, but yes  
I hear it. Every ass is a bouncing Savannah,  
but the beauty of this urban avenue  
is the necessity one feels to have to make a home  
in oneself: flags in the nostrils.

The skull of the couch placates my loneliness,  
you see. Fidgeting the Star Trek hymnal:  
there're seven pianos in the warp,  
twelve fingers dance gayly along their keys,  
post-op, life-off. Tourniquets are salutary.

That way one slumbers in hypertext  
burritos, lathers up in fumigous Christian  
foam, dial X on the telephone  
thirty-seven times in no particular order,  
the flowers arrive with their careerist bartender,  
so piss. Williamsburg, Athens, gone  
so plastic and suspicious in an apartment.

Things you've never seen  
in dreams or on TV...  
a man being helped out of an elevator,  
or waiting...  
just "waiting."  
What colorless green is that?

6.

As I said  
to my friend, John, this  
tired poem of mine  
will never stop, I  
must compose it in Braille  
in order to achieve  
a wider audience.

I will take this all in, he says  
to arrange is to arrange  
to arrange is not to derange,  
and so, I will try  
to take it all in.

*Unbeautiful, visceral  
black spot surrounded by silver  
on the retina,  
calmly as stars block the night.*

He reflects:  
why couldn't I have been smarter  
all those years,  
    and English,  
and in the *mainstream* of life.

If I could sleep, I'd be happy.  
It's *something I want to do*.

What is this thing called swing?

In the vividness, I try  
your eyelashes. Dis-  
cover a plateau of flesh  
has betrayed my location.

Let's hope he's dead in heaven.

7.

I don't think much of this  
will make sense. I know  
indeed, the street wends further  
than knobby knees carry thee.  
You took me here, thinking  
I'm a lover, a ghost of  
previous cinematic composites  
but, alas, I am an egg.  
What's that asking for our bravery  
in occupation? Do you  
partake in the fancy rituals  
of posing amidst specializations  
of soul, hand, eye, all?  
I'm respectful of your vocabulary  
but my syllables are the art.

This is where I start spraying.

8.

These are the nice guys,  
Master.

Yours is the elf  
and everything else in it.

The ringing glass.  
They're dusting the distance.

Scrooge

Starring Roger Daltrey as Scrooge

The purveyors of:  
"My nerves are bad. Yes, bad.  
Speak to me. Why doesn't anyone ever  
speak to me. Speak"  
are ridiculous.

Seventy-five Santified capitalists later...

I'm really  
just dangling above the prostate.



9.

"It makes us pray again,"  
ordinarily I'd just pass Go,  
but he was different, cute  
in that Andre Serrano sort of way,  
in profile, metaphysically Indian.

If you collect the debts  
of another man's debts,  
but I had play stations to do  
and minded my own business.

The choired strings of the Brookiyn  
Bridge loomed in the mist  
above legions of dancing gringos  
I'd read about, on the island  
from which I'd escaped for a refreshing furlong  
which I had deserved for some time.

As papers go,  
this one is good.

But now my breezy moustaches  
sense danger, my tie leaps westward  
to the porn shops by the playground  
where they drink diamonds by the tea,  
all radiant in the glow of a Tuesday afternoon.  
"I'd gladly pay you Tuesday  
for a hamburger today," I hum  
in jodhpurs, spandex, and other glam slacks.

How sensational  
to feel Nietzschean!  
My mother would say it's just a ruse.  
So I settled for some André Breton,  
a Corona Light, a guilty package of Gitanes  
Katz's famous reuben, and an Ikea port-a-john.

10.

He'd managed to remain in the news:  
all these people, dimpled copycats –  
let's jack into the logarithm, placate  
that demand for the exterior  
that is flesh, is soft and supple.

The moon rose behind the mesh  
of the Ancients, shadows on the sands  
of Tranquility Phase Court:

where earlier had been the demonstration  
against the Academy no one demeaned,  
reviewed, or noticed.

A sonnet's worth of noise now would be fantastic,  
fandango and elastic, pretty and cheap,  
smart yet solipsistic, spoke the soothing Elaborator  
in the Mark Seventeen Headset.

The Fostex Capital Five perimeter was eroding,  
soon, it would be time to hasten far hence, distances  
measured in hype-years, googol-miles,  
to the arboretum they fashioned in the catalogue.

She approaches from the video with a slight groan.

"Hazards are in the palm of my history,"  
leaks the vibrator, stammering with junk  
the last loafer left to be considered  
as art, or the decorative arts, at least,  
presaging a deterrence. Tulips:  
vis-a-vis, tulips, heh,  
marvel at them as if stranded on a wind-swept promontory  
coke-addled, struck by kindnesses that  
finally, were black globs of gel  
swarming up to the parking lots of the tenements.

"This freedom corrodes," she intrudes, I think  
to my benefit, as it was a tight fit here, all by  
myself. She of the damask eyes. A Burt  
I'd never known. So the collectibles continue.

One, two, I've said this several  
times. It was recognizable as Ming  
again, the Ming Family Christmas  
boiling all the toaster ovens, flicking the switch.

11.

Like Sharaku's Japanese  
I like to make funny faces,  
is that protest?  
It's not, famn damily,  
the earnestness of my waist  
in Hoboken light,  
red patent leather,  
checked shirt, tan, sunglasses –  
this leisure is diplomacy.

But what to make of Jacques Debrot?  
they ask. Tyro sniggers, coughs  
blood into his monogrammed handkerchief  
and blunders some phrase  
lifted from T. J. Snow,  
all in some Bergsonian moment  
that the bystanders don't catch on, no  
5:14 on a Saturday, at the Ear  
that didn't exist when we meant it to, and now  
is still known  
as the only place to meet.

Some from fear of depression  
learning love of good paper...  
some going out,  
    drinking too much,  
making friends.  
And when he pretends  
to have none of the information  
    we are smarter  
about history, but  
duller about the present day,  
some wanting to write home about  
the price of batteries in Afghanistan.

“Bomb them with jobs, food  
and education!” They were listening!  
And abrasive cleaners and Limp Bizkit  
and telethons  
and the books of Guy Debord –

and then some pretentious accents  
to deflect the pious ones,  
or street accents  
to make up new songs.”

*Anudda one ride's the bus-a.*

The intestines can choke on wheat:  
Celia Sprue.

Piano music: strong as pills.  
Blocked moments persist  
in this blue, late light  
that wants to suffocate the rules.

Pineal, corrective of  
immediate activity in the fingers,  
slivers of this excess  
balance pressured figurines.

Turn an eyelash  
toward the door  
recognizing a person late  
arriving for your retrieval  
who had disembarked six days ago, and  
rained on and impatient,  
unskilled as you are, listens  
not. So that the lock on  
the door is ripped from its screws.  
So that the lock on  
the door has been ripped from its wood.

12.

Something smokes beside the clock's loneliness:  
the speaking rabbit queries, its nods and suggestions  
a proactive applause in these winter preparations,  
while nothing thrums my heart in this flattering holiness.

No reason to attend to sense, is this  
some sort of failure? A test, that time  
truly be a ribbon in which the midden  
of experience finds itself housed?

To chart the drift and currents of  
as poetry, some American mission  
imagining a frontier in the trivial?  
A body on crests of the very seconds?

Eventually, to see colors  
go on from there  
not having any topics.  
So smart, these jokes:

I could almost write a poem about it.  
Pray, eventually,  
for the experience: a bustling wheat field.

My brand of lethargy can't withstand it.  
Eventually, going slower,  
with no high-kicks and somersaults.

You might call it  
two separate islands,  
how to love,  
how to beseech,  
and when  
                    she's gone  
the two islands  
were strange fiction.  
You should have been here  
ten second ago  
because, most likely,  
you'd still be here now.