

77  
30

**THE LEDGES**

78  
31

4 a.m.                      lips move

moon  
cell

ice

realm of pure symbol

etched in the eye

cult of paper

owl              egg              and thigh

From this hour on

to know the spine-rant

licking shut all the openings

to the outside

A deep unquiet in  
the hands

the paper

breathing

fields of dust  
from my face

the sun throbbing

like ice in the blood

the moment is a lived  
memory

a looking backward  
into the present

the statue of a ghost

turning to face the moonrise

the flesh knows nothing  
but sere blackness

a static blur

behind a lattice  
of empty windows

Upon  
    this Sunday  
under the grey  
    sun  
trains  
    bring  
untold stories  
    of  
rain and suicide  
    in December  
light  
    the river  
darkens  
keeping  
    its secrets  
from my pages

Steps  
    into the stone wind  
to enter the branches  
    from inside the howls of dogs

I read mummified books  
that crumble in my hands

Soon

    I am the living room again

A lamp burns within me

I see a pen  
    lost in the couch's folds  
A life there undreaming itself

As it becomes each minute  
more elusive and pale

Breath  
inhaling  
breath

turning  
into mist

adrift  
in snow-fields

writing  
the black weeds

daily

sinking deeper  
into ghostworlds

slowly  
eaten  
by stones

The glyphs  
speak aloud

calling  
the wood-gods

to drink  
starlight

from the blood-  
roots  
of ancient dryads

a shout  
and a whisper

the world  
cracks  
open

a landscape  
of winter

and red  
flames

84  
3/1

On your back  
a face  
of white lichen

as though a  
star  
had died there

the woodthrush's  
song  
shimmers

all  
around you

I lower myself  
to inhabit  
you

on  
the wordless surface  
of space

In pre-time

smoke and ice  
a light in my lungs

rustle

of drying wings

hollow fingers of sleep

grow  
into the paper

darker and colder

no memory  
before  
you

Always waiting  
these  
notebooks

out of autumn's  
womb

thrown into winter

born  
of dead suns

succubus-eyes

scarlet decay  
of cities

what  
cannot

be written

will  
be read

under this  
black river

Even  
the supreme alchemist  
knows

his ceaseless labors  
to be futile

he toils anyway  
until his eyes turn gold  
his hands blacken into slime

he swims  
in the blood-cells  
of beauty

the sun  
is  
extinguished

and the tower  
sealed

around the oriole's song

88  
/1

Black sunflowers  
shout the ice

the crow's call comes  
across five-hundred years

of greyness

echoing the pages

trying to recall  
single words

my name

your hands

asleep

forever

We leave  
our house  
and enter the rain

nothing  
calls us back

the trees bend  
down  
to lift us

we flow  
through their fingers  
a green wine

transforming  
endlessly

until  
we alight

rooting into bark

our voices  
sprouting

into  
the wind

90  
~~43~~

The page is time  
cold as memory

I fall into its white abyss

as though I had travelled  
ninety-three million miles

to find a star of ice

a book

inhabited

by salt    bone    and    hoar

A black yeast  
swells  
around my hands

leaves of steel  
grasp  
at my face

I listen to my footsteps  
falling  
around the house

a hooded shadow  
clutching a book

wandering

in a landscape

of pillars and snow

92  
~~45~~

Echoes of sleep darken this time

soon life will end  
this spectacle of color

from the mouth of the sorcerer

will fall  
into space

while there are still images left

I will walk  
with you

along the banks of the planet  
to the edge of the river

we will watch everything

become better  
than a dream

before jumping  
into the radiant waters

to become silver

ringing  
within ourselves

a million bells  
merging  
with the stars

## Hands

come out of my hands  
to catch the spores streaming  
through your transparent body

in you I can see  
cataracts of ash rising from the earth

a necklace of moons at the end of time

what I want to say

was written long ago

the sweetness of the yellow fields

an image of light on your throat

the song of the snails at our windows

my arms fall into the grass

around you

there is no time or place

for us

99 94  
4/

A book of secrets  
woven of archaic fields  
illuminates this place  
absent even of ghosts

its pages are screech owl colors  
snow-cries  
a long sapphire feather of breath  
spiralling into hazel light

:crystals of green blood  
licked from the trees

beside the river,  
bleakest of prayers

shroud of hawk bones  
flowing beneath our house:

I stand aside and watch  
the passage of notes

figments of a trembling season

on this bridge disappearing into dream

From my room  
deep in the earth  
stars rise into the night-gardens

where the lights  
of buried cities  
flower into dream-sounds

in the dead spaces  
words fall apart  
into flakes of gold

that cover root-eyes hand-claws  
a blind scratching against the sky

white crows eat our sleep

spines fill with honey

our names become the edges  
of uninhabitable houses  
milkweed blackening in the wind

alien seasons pass  
a cold green water washes us  
our time does not come  
on this remote planet that has thrown us

up to become cyphers  
symbols in the air  
reflections of each other

in between landscapes

96  
48

Signs torn from the back of her neck  
a handful of light flesh becomes shadow  
moist

pulse and shiver

the unattainable gulf

river-music the green heron  
plays across our faces

fallen

the dark cloth of Sundays  
our doubles commit suicide

where the sun has just passed

a cold black egg remains

97

56

Moist syllables stream  
from the lichen-mouth

the hidden drop of sap  
opening into years of water

a deep lace across the sky  
shadow-pulse of red cicada suns

texts of pure symbol recovered  
against the decayed silences

August: cold wind and rain.  
A blood-covered light  
covers the maps of silence and death.  
Words scatter across the fields.

Time falls,  
a mournful sound,  
purple skin peels back,  
a white nerve tolls.

Lonely utterance from  
the grass.  
Blinding, unreadable omens.

A call across summer.  
From deep in the woods,  
the cuckoo's dark prophecy.

Ghosts swim in the empty rooms  
of our bones.  
Life narrows to a summer evening.  
The wren of folk tales  
flies back and forth  
across the yard.  
A dark moth flutters  
through mist-filled centuries.

The silver echo of our whispers  
invents languages  
necessary to survival.  
Visions are everything-

A basilisk face  
watches me  
from my sleep.

100  
53

An oriole writes the morning  
song of gold ashes

a cicada being born  
in layers of bark

the trance-net  
catches  
fields

roadsides  
lined  
in milkweed

hands tremble  
at the coming  
of autumn

behind the gates  
of the asylum  
an imperial moth

waiting

101  
5/4

Going to the blank page again and again  
to consult  
the void within the void  
for anything  
whispered fragments of gossamer  
I press against hot lead  
a cicada jets into depths of air  
a dark rune has fallen

From the coffin of the skull  
intermittent signals  
every million years

the dead loss

seasons mesh  
light and dark the same

the line mirrors the moment  
zero, echo, moon in a window

white fading into transparency

the larva raging

within the pupa

Zone of water shadows  
clasp of stone  
where we live exiled

the attempted leap from words

anvil of light  
the sky towers down

crows turn the leaves into metal

buried in the sun

knowing in advance our last thoughts

scraping together

in the dawn

there is little left here  
that ache too will disappear

One hand clutches the  
other  
aching for stillness.

Beneath the blue light  
of the street lamp,  
moles move in the earth,  
chewing grubs,  
sucking the giant dock dry.

I ask the maple  
if there can be a time  
for beauty,  
if we can ever be silent  
and unmoving.

It answers in the voice  
of a katydid,  
telling me,  
Lie down by my side  
and listen to the river  
forever.

Shaking in the darkness,  
my hands grip each other  
tighter,

I fall to my knees  
and pray desperately  
to the grass.

In autumn  
the sticks get up and  
walk  
their white, wet eyes  
unblinking  
as they circle  
round and round  
in the yard

Pheasants bring us  
wine the color of sumac  
mixed with blood  
in small black glasses  
swirling with stars

Skin and feathers  
dance,  
drunk on frost and  
dead-leaf bread  
inks turn oily red  
we dig through clay  
beneath the streams  
we wait for years  
in blue moss sleep  
for the salamander king

In autumn  
we reclaim our  
empire  
the fields open  
to embrace us  
unending  
gold and purple creatures  
take us to their earthen lairs  
and feed us  
the sweet sweet roots of death.

106  
79

Bird  
of snow  
calling,

ice-orb,  
black  
branch-heart,

nightyears  
blanketing

the million-voiced  
river.

Hysteria  
of bones,

raw grey  
landscape of  
breath,

our faces  
winter suns,  
stone-pores

in the forest

circling  
ourselves,

our dreams  
leave no tracks

in an owl-less  
time.

From  
this rasping space  
between  
the letters,

the  
wall of ice  
and stone

in which  
I am embedded,

I shout  
single words  
into the throat  
of the raven.