

## Wave

The storms of concession and the little viruses they keep warm  
the way virtue or confession never could  
only a crenellation both upbeat and feral  
a particle of ragtime, rose of success plucked  
the text and totem were in recession, so syllables grew wicks and added value,  
but the rusty valve of night might well turn out eternal  
if space does not occupy space, only this crazy kindness  
like a tendril brushed too quick, when actually it had been blazing  
    all that time  
and somehow, we help hope in poppies  
to outgrow their allegories and fame, maybe forget  
but a face keeps appearing, ruffles our shy, ship-like trance,  
dark and singular as a petitioner who braves the outside  
just to stand beside the sliding glass of time  
on these jittery, preoccupied mornings  
when one awakens to remember the leader's name.  
Dull and exhausted, the old red dragon was maimed,  
Part by parting part, sez this fresh young paradigm,  
Zipping and unzipping her rocket.

(1998)

## My Headache

Aspiriin in the forebrain,  
blooming magnolia  
eclipsed by substance  
elated in revision  
but paralyzed in parenthesis  
an aftermath of ellipsis  
or moon looming over rent promised  
or the destruction of California  
long overdue like relatives and residuals  
but smart as a stripe, ripe as a neuron  
eager to explain simple music  
a syllable at a time to elegant ladies  
streaked in orange, hedged  
between naps  
when the dear genius  
arrives to clear the shrubs  
to the second freeway,

symbol of the one brick is still in place  
the old man dreaming of another drink  
no pupils no particle of light  
print out of nothing  
to die causa sui in a line of nights,  
preoccupied with the taxis that take him apart  
one ant, then an aurora through the thorax  
steeple vanished, people forgiven  
nucleus of rhythm dropping out, steel blue

(1998)

### Oblation

Half-hurled out the window, seemingly by my own hand, my arms were loaded with wood and I awoke beside the volcano but some vain hope of quelling the awful buzzing between where I was and where I was not assured me that the state of transition was clear and distinct in a note or drop of rain, although I'd never been fond of music, especially when flowing toward the bearer of the big cigar or the large pot of soup called proof.

That's when I was seized by Principal and beaten until I grew to love the ring or was it the success of success against the brute fact that I was in need of atonement for the hackneyed haecceities of ruin and confusion brought on myself by zipping and unzipping my rocket as if by coming apart by parting part I'd evade the invasion of adders.

But matter had become a matter no more private than cutting the skull out so I hocked my head to pure statistics, ducking out of only one lecture on the only snow recorded to offer my headmeat to intuition and quit my quibbling over distinctions between choice and selection

But an asp I'd been all that talk about emptiness at the core what slithers off beat when all of history is a colon to nature only a little less than lustful, a little less than final having long since given up on applause, settling instead for ovation.

(from *Nova*, 2001)

### Deep Throat, Declined

When like palms the doors of the apothecary pry open—

My hand fumbles past the figs and poultry to pluck a passion fruit  
color and shape of the most famous homeopath any white dress ever

knew though so old it came apart before the eyes

all I remember is the sting of silver nitrate then swallowed up in  
cowboy boots with the hope of turning blue, but it was and  
was not you who passed  
out in the grass a full three hours, more a question of address  
if just to confirm the position of things, lest we are served another  
hilly-billy king whose  
context has gone madly insufficient, not like  
liberty or pride, but the ghost of them  
breathing their echoes into our ovals,  
caught in the throat, and beating more officious than  
the continuous questions of how long coming from the south or  
how much jade on the trail home  
when there is no girl with face of jade, no boy blue beneath  
the heavens, blankets, heavens again  
marshalling against that western light to greet the widow of the  
apparatus who waits at the end for an end to her wait  
spreading like dementia across an otherwise  
promising book everyone had found and put back, although once or  
twice hobble back up—intoxicated—to tear it apart.

Followed instead the pithy comet that struck the helmet and swung  
out of bounds,  
the moon in tow, so that it could not possibly be a question of  
coming together  
or whether pleasure causes pleasure, but who's filling the script  
if there be any difference that gives the slip.

(from *Nova*, 2001)

Over

Tapped out in a long hall

what careens out of the emptiness but disapproval or pleas  
take the stairwell  
it's only the terrible sound of ordinary language  
singing through the exit wound  
do not transfer into drowsiness  
who do you work for that you are not so drowsy or well-versed in  
transferring out  
how do you warble  
and how may I eat the lily beneath your instructions when you  
have ghost on your breath and lisp a face?

My former employer, is it that participation precedes the value of  
work or does participation precede awareness  
when it is all corrupt sky stiffening up beneath creases and pleats,  
creases  
and pleats of ink and fusion

And yet there remains first rain, then intuition

they come and get us or is the abstraction all a form of drowsiness

I sleep in my boots and the days pass right over me, except for  
here and there  
when I peak out the envelop, complicit  
or fumble toward the pulse and perforation in the distance but  
farewell to the teal lows, carbonation at the cliff of a mirage  
farewell to sorting us out, to *telos*  
and farewell  
to the caboose the color and shape of broth  
unless the property of visibility could muster the weight to bring  
down at least the visibility of property, if its painstaking  
nonchalance wouldn't be overturned each spring like a  
capsule for an ache that was nothing much.

(from *Nova*, 2001)

from "Nova Suite"

Cloud tangible, stars that wobble.

But not raining.

Ashes convoy toward the floor in intervals

the only cargo, a dead moan  
or an axon eroding  
but the infinite was not a problem of atoms as tiny universes  
but of science\* as a vibration

entropy as appropriation of work, boards, planks

leaks, widths

a tenth of an asteroid used for an asterisk

always a chink in the infinite regress  
effacing the rose or a coat of foam  
metallurgic as memory—

where birds are best—

set aside

\*"I'd rather be a professor in Basel, than a retired god," says the General over the pings of the pinball machine. The geisha turns and coughs, but the undergraduate persists, "Do you like money? If so, I have no flaws."

(from *Nova*, 2001)

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#### PERMISSIONS

"Wave" and "My Headache"  
Reprinted from *Ribot: over 60 under 30* (1998)

"Oblation," "Deep Throat, Declined," "Over" and selection from "Nova Suite"  
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