DAVID JAFFIN

AS ONE

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as always for Rosemarie,
Raphael and Andreas

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AS ONE

AS ONE

The sound of
these words

the image and
sense are one

if the reflec-
tion of I

in the waters
in the late

afternoon
is the same.

TOUCH

When I touch this lamp
I pull the stars down

it closes light
simply the touch my fingers

tell its thoughts
your face imprinted to

this sound
for the lines break a

night of separate stars
you think what I touch

and the dark
glimmers its light through

  us.

THE ROSE

The rose is
that rose to
me: stilled

petals, soft
repose (but
complete)

to the fic-
tions of
touch, primed

(considered),
refined—
the mind

wanders as
the hand,
delicate

breaks.

QUIET NOTE

Autumn has
a quiet note
as well

the way the
birds turn to
the wind

that their co-
lor is known.

SHELL

I touched at its wings
when the tides were
  in

and I was sad before
the waves rose to
their height

and I could not hear
  my sadness.

BUT THE ONE

You told me
two truths

but the one
(your eyes)

transitional.

BALLERINA

The world was balanced on a
  single toe.

The dance was over,
we'd all applauded

the curtain fell
but she didn't move.

We shuffled from our place
the lights went on

that curtain fell again
but she didn't move.

Her eyes, her thoughts
and all she ever was

suspended from a sin-
  gle toe.

VERMEER

She wouldn't look
to where we wanted her face
  to be
didn't quite come to
  focus

but kept turning away,
touching aside
to the tangible objects of
  that place

shy in a way
but we knew her then
as he turned that light
  in

that she touched, as
  of herself
each feature with those self-
enclosed fingers.

ANNUNCIATION

Its shadow
(was it taken
  as light)

broken and still
for a moment
defined the wind—

It was spring
(its coming)

That afternoon
clear and known;

She saw the sta-
tues touched,
a sun grazed

their heart,
distinct now.

THE CUP

The cup was
shared and
clean, de-

cipherable
(too) for
the present

want; as it
touched his
lips the

lights suc-
cessively di-
minished as

a flame put
out with co-
vered hands;

he drank,
but his thirst
was dry.

CHESS PIECES

Time's exact,
the clean
spaces be-

tween, po-
lished to the
phrase, carved

and rarified—
Touch would
gleam as

touch, the
eye confined
as glass

refine its
chosen pre-
sence.

TO DAPHNE

My mind's cold
the leaves are conscious
    formed

your face refrains
    from thought;

My mind's the cold and
    conscious act
the leaves are glistened,
    gold

your face withholds the
    outline of its

    form.

PRISONER

His loneliness
pained him but

once

when he passed by a
mirrored wall

regrettable (in-
deed)

his face reflec-
ted

scarcely there.

MANNEQUIN

Her dress spec-
ially fit,

tailored to fine
phrases,

the scent attri-
butable

(if spurious)
as of fingers on

cloth curled and
consumed these

strictures of
fact.

BIRDS IN A CAGE

One doesn't like being closed
  in like that
to such a shortness of space
and with wings that couldn't
  fly,
provided they were taught
to flutter harmlessly
  by,
looking pretty, perhaps,
but performing less;

And one tires of gold, too
  tarnished at that
that need be cleaned from
  time to time
and of looking at oneself
  (two faces)
in the mirror re-
  volving
or looking out at what's
  looking in.

FRÄULEIN T.

A bird flew in her room
  one day,

She wouldn't believe it
  though

ran for her colored bird
  book
found the proper wings

as she was looking
the bird flew away

She wouldn't believe it
  though

sat long with her book by
  the window.

A BELIEF
(of Nathaniel Pink)

My life is predicated
on the belief

that birds fly westwards
in the afternoon,
in the late afternoon

and leave shadows behind,
gather silences
stretched out their wings

I feel a purpose in that,
something for me to

believe I at the centre
of things (as they
pass overhead)

Unobserved I stand
anticipate the start the
flourish of wings,

feel the expanse of
sky (I at the centre
of things)

marking out that place
at angles to myself,
leaving shadows

behind, gathering si-
lences there.

CLARA

She was made
of the things
she took with

her fingers
according to season
and want,

berry and branch,
the bloodless
thorn that ran

straight to her
  veins.

IN LIGHT

A bird uncovered sound,
prepared its wing

shadows kept close to the
  leaves
the sun slate

its heart written straight
across the claws
signed them all,

in light.

SUNDAY: HIND LEGS

Sunday:
birds sprint among the
branches

upsetting the winter
stillness

a dog sits in
snow,
hind legs the pillars of
his house

times are made that
way:

permanent scene
sudden thought
the arch of sound

constructing a position to
watch from.

PASTURES

He was like a horse
in a meadow without a fence.

Someone had put him there
he couldn't remember anymore
about those workings
the early rompings the
seasoned markings pressed to
his side, ingrained for
more than enough years

He was like a horse
in a meadow without a fence
looking for water
and a hand that could close
  him in

He reared fast to the side,
saddle and stirrups a-
  libied
domestic stillness

He wouldn't come,
the years had passed
the pasture cropped with his
takings and I wouldn't
build a fence there
even if he told me to.

AND AT THE END

And at the end you'll
  ask,
as you've always done,
but then I won't
  answer—

Will you remember, that?

I'll simply stare,
set still as a face of
  stone,

And if you ask again,
a little louder
your face concealing
  concern

I won't answer ei-
  ther—
please, don't expect
that of me.

AT THE RIGHT MOMENT

He came at the right moment
for the room was empty.

He closed it quickly behind
concealing himself there.

He turned the key,
he covered the windows with
  shadow.

He took his shoes
and the sounds of his thoughts,
  off.

He removed himself from that moment
  softly aside

He stood where nothing could
  have been.

SYMBOLS

You always agreed
(either to what I
  said or the ar-

  guments opposed),
Assumed, accepted
satisfactions be-

  tween us
Time stayed still,
a cat curled with-

out will of its
  own;

but I've grown into that
symbol of his-self,

at my feet
(long since asleep)

  the cat.

TIME PIECE

And the day after yester
  day

When you put this apple
  in my hand

and compared it
(metaphorically speaking)

to the rose

All the world's round
  after all

William Tell couldn't have cared
  less

and Eve hadn't been named to
  the board of directors

  yet

Sin has its price too
  I suppose

all the leaves come down
whether you like it or

  not

I found this apple
  on the road

just rotting away by it
  self.

AMERICANA
(Southern, 1880s) for my nephews

On a long summer
day when shadows leaned their
width full length against

some other to be
described, inopportune
structure inappro-

priately referred to as

a fence,

when birds scrawny
eyed looked like straw hats
tipped too far afront

and one wore bluejeans
brass buttons/
comic cobbed pipe

between one's molared lips

proud of it all,
increasingly aware of

that aforementioned.

SIMILAR CONCLUSIONS

A radio isn't
a room

even if we've gathered about
the same thing

and windows could look the
other way out

not back
stairs don't lead to

similar conclusions

unless we've taken the wrong
way out com
pared

to that assumption
a chimney with
out smoke's

a radio with
out a room

to listen in.

A HOUSE OF WINDOWS

That house was simply windows

it looked out at me
as persons without names.

It was stone and I thought
  it so

it had a gate and I couldn't
  enter.

Birds sang, however bright, there
  through shadow

one passed it by
even when the lights were
  on

and one could feel one's
  steps, withdraw.

It was a house of windows
  simply windows

looking out.

OF THE SAME THINGS

And you didn't look when I
  came in the room

It was raining outside

the door closed behind
and we sat at the same table,

the room itself was shadow,
  sound and object

with a light in the middle
and windows at the sides.

You didn't look when I came
  in the room,

when I took my hat
  in my hands

when I closed my coat on
  the chair

when I sat as any other object
  in that room

It was raining outside

and we could hear the sounds
  of the same things.

HOUSE OF DEATH

She was cold when
  we came

Hands stiffened ex-
  tended upwards

wouldn't remain in
  their place,

Face swollen still
that room alive
  and active

wanting silence with-
  out her.

OF HER, NOW

And what do we have of
her, now:

Those pieces we can't seem
to place, just right as
they were;

Smiles of that livened face
that yellow at the
sides;

A house that's provided for
others,
long since repainted

A memory, a meaning here
or there
as the touch of free-
flowing hair

and a stone they've carved
out since,
quite clearly.

DISTINCT

The clock was turning sound

leaves stood in the late af-
  ternoon

by the window
your flesh muted in
  light

I saw your face
looking through itself

(the circles of sound)

A silence that could
  be touched

in this room
a shadow crossed

birds held in flight

as your hands thought,
felt the edge of cloth

The clock ticked a
  sound

that the darkness was
  distinct.

LATE MARCH

Late in March
there was a windstill on
    the lake

the sky mirrored itself
and we walked the winds
    our way

Three boys stood at the bridge
trying the water with their
    line

though the land was want
    of growth
and their fingers kept

    with cold
the touch of the dead,
this last of winter

They gazed within the
    water
searching for light

Swans moved along the
    surface
floating on sound

the clouds closed with-
    in themselves

Late in March,
This windstill on the
    lake.

ACCEPTED

He grew old in the afternoon,
shadows became of him.

He could have sat with a book
  in his hand,
closing the corners be-
  tween them.

He could have talked outloud
  if he wanted
as one talks to a child
thinking oneself increa-
  singly smaller

or he could have cleaned
  and cleared away
all that unevenness others referred
  to as himself

but instead he grew old in the
  afternoon,
shadows became of him.

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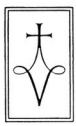
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