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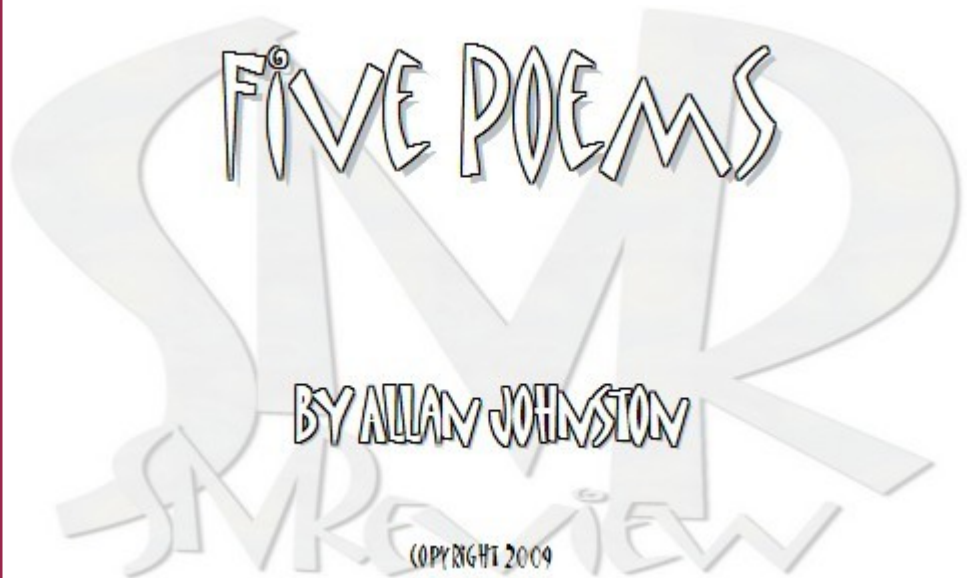
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Bramble

We keep returning here, an emptying
tangle of clothes where brambles block

the way—sheared path of nakedness;
this earth once was mud;

the tracks remain, with a skin of diamonds
held in twigs: a snake has passed.

The way we come back also is
an emptying —

hands bore scratch

and stain, juice, effluent, purple and pink
the broken skins. We grabbed what we could
in the dance and branches of our
shedding; much can be seen

as an emptying;

preamble, that day — shed clothes and fingers,
laughter, juice —

these weeds
of love.

To Corey

Endless rodeos left you silent
on the road of hours
stretched forward in a great ribbon
underneath this moon

You sought answers in some vision
dwelling only in the houses
of the unworshipped dead night could only be
the wing beat of black birds

in the empty head of heaven

Now at last you come back to the road
you started from some forty years ago
to find the fire of some forsaken house

Only I a bleak Tiresias
await your tread upon the earth
of gardens where you held the quiet toys
of childhood strange imaginary beings
in lawn furniture and black dumbbells
of yearning

hell! hell! the endless cry of birth

The Smokers

One holds a hand out, criss-crossing; tricky:
the smoke lifts over her like water
disturbed by an oar, flowing out from the boat
of her mouth, a cry of a body released.

 Velvet smoke veils sperming up
into the economy of air in a glow
of existence. Where the hand waves,
traces linger, forcing convections
from the pursing mouth into meaning,
an upward drift of thought thick
and smoke eased into air and out:

 the quick play by a lamp, then off
into fuming darkness
the restless knot goes, a cow-shaped cloud
forming a clot of anger --

 it is changing
into a brain, its grain then tucks up
suddenly in an updraft into
a noose and dives into walls of the bar,
dissolving as a body might,
born in the cost of smoke
settling now from the next slow instinct
of pleasure or release,
above this fleece, the deadly and unscented
lie of relaxation into life,
the execution of her seven types of sex:

One girl then swings around and holds a hand out,
smoke circling after her again in the blandness
of air, following the talisman
of the cigarette. She is explaining
to her friends the meaning
of the behavior of someone she dated,
and the smoke, as if aping, agrees with her,
changing into a casual tool,
clutching, a ring of exhaust moving

into disturbance when the women laugh.

Travel in Dreams

The wise know the best trips never begin
The train waiting, an egg in the terminal

The leap through a glassy yes of powder
On the way from the Gare at Pont du Nord

For when Glasgow is Paris, hills and forest
Are as they are in California

On the train a Congressman's pregnant wife
Explains how one needs nothing to get into office

But the confidence of others.

The wise know

The journeys break up even before the alarm clocks

They never end, just as the days never end
And this is how the voyagers keep their altitude

Constantly moving into the real day's sacrifice
For eyes have staged their cartwheels through the night

And a tired Odysseus here before his adventures

Dead
trying to enter the body that starts as song

Plus que parfait

Tense: he had to swallow it
as if there were other ways
to understand what had happened:
corporeally,

or simply,

as imperfect or more than perfect.
"She had become an artist...."

the words are robbers the form of being
(opposed to being) adding itself
to the conjugation

conditional, subjunctive, imperative, indicative or infinitive
the further the imperfect past becoming then more than perfect —
what happened first being more
time
then descending to a marvellous
so-called most perfect origin
in the logic of language

"J'ai appris la leçon que le prof avait expliqué"
the modal growth of the tongue
ou "elle portait la robe qu'elle avait faite"
slowly

the origin
