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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

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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

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## 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.

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## 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

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## 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

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in the idea giving birth  
to it  
brick language tough highway banjo pudenda stopwatch  
all collapsed  
in the play  
of words

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