5 I CARRIED MY TEETH IN MY HEART

Recording of an act
in bed with wooden posts

*in a while, crocodile*

dark
snow

orange halo
&
their shadow

a door, the hall, it closed, lines

of light
There was a long hedgerow by the road.

In summer, I would crawl inside especially when the shadows were long.

People would walk & I quivered

holding my laugh.

There is an orchard in the mind beneath the mind!
I grew up in Aurora, Ithaca, and New Hartford, New York. Every school day, my dad and I walked down Cascadilla Gorge trail. I went to school in the basement of the stone church at the bottom of the hill. Before arriving, water flowed over green algae and burst into white off ledges. *(The sound of the water was everywhere!)*
Within most forests breathe forgotten things.
Formless and transparent, filled with restlessness,
they flood surrounding static with their song,
then are gone.

Even the loudest justice
quivers beneath the sound that shakes its instance.

In the still undercurrent, luminosity
Breaks into fragments of multicolored glass

the animals, even, shiver with longing.

If the deep rock caverns,
the sunfall,
the algae covered light
Often, later, I remembered what she’d told him, like the secrets grown inside their hands

or the days begun without a word but fingers crossed. In the night air, when stillness tells the world there’s still life

inside the quiet, we hear the city coming together like the bar I went to last weekend, singing,

or the stadium shouting out the match, and the families, even, more beautiful than loneliness.

If I occlude the hour, shift sideways, or smile instead of words,

it’s only that a subway moving underground has come and gone.

I remembered how he’d hold you.
all the philosophy books sit silent

ganular
eddies
on the L

tthis world not
like that world

and how do I

become a person
Sometimes, at daybreak, the light tunnels were endless. Reaching through the courtyard, true, they woke large starlings in the upper reaches of his dream. These populated wells along old interstates and spoke a thousand languages ancient pathways broach.

At night, I would undo the marks the evening’s walkways make. Like a sand-erased shore, a firmament, I talked aloud in my sleep to the emptiness. Never ever it was there without me, the open life. And inside the forgetful hours, new substance broke up far along the stone-blocked lake where people rode bicycles and ate cold ice cream in the dark.
I stepped from the curb into moonlight
and heard suddenly the streets awake
of white winged moths.

like you they flew
somewhere aimlessly with a sign
behind them that
they cannot see
Busses outside roar past
this cold, November day.

Antoine’s coffee on the stove steams.

I heard words on
the steps, then in the courtyard.

I feel the time
in the city.
We become a silver sky.
The riots broke out while I was there. You never know when you are in a plane.

*Abu Dhabi is beautiful, because it is calm,*
different passengers think.

Typical to modernity, nothing fits.

A steward in the bathroom lost his wits. Some are praying. Others passing time.
When I saw you off —
you
disappeared down
the block.

a dress of roses

when we talked
I can be philosophical
as a fish
that swims in
visions
vaguely remembering touch.
Or love wisdom
when a cat, instinctively, goes
to
sleep.

O
the world is made of maggots,
Aurelius.

Through air, clouds and time:

I walked.

sudden glare

yellow slope  brick walls
I was climbing up a hall that went in turns, wide and ample,
toward the hillside’s plateau,
  halls like galleries slung from *Russian Ark*,
  but in some cathedral
    with spots of rain soaking through
    in stains along
      the ceiling and faded carpet stretched within
        the ascending stone.

And only one woman praying at the top,
  an upper balcony, the church seen in
    fragments below.

Then another woman, more solitary, far, also
  deep in consolation,
    “God” both with her and away.

The first showed me the direction to depart
the church atop the Heights,
and
I did. It was
  grey outside, typical French weather in Normandy.
    The outer plaza was abandoned
      and rose in waves of stone-made hills.

I walked among them and awoke.
Sometime later, I wondered where
my thoughts had gone. It was early morning,
with the dog beside me leaning on my leg and pressed
into the arm of the upholstered chair. I felt
that there was too much time and
there were too many broken things. I felt
that I had wasted out.
The porch was made of splintered talk.  
Like age, it had become a place for people to remember  
the event that is the sprawling finitude of our lives and even  
of the truths, words, systems we take to be everything that is and couldn’t be!  

We sat there for a while in the sun.
Take me to a time that has become *unreal*.
Late adolescence will do when in my 20s
I imagined I was near adulthood
and all my closest friendships carried the glow of completeness.
It was like this to be alive and free
enjoying the outer skin of intimacy,
but we were not even brothers to ourselves
at least in talking,
where our conversations were so limited
in terms of our sense of our fears
and of our needs.
I want to place these chapters inside a book.
A book about becoming unlike
so many that pass for philosophy
in the rows of graphically undulating spines of
new translations.
When “great philosophies” are first perceived, their systems (or un-systems) are like clouds, apprehended in the air momentarily as aesthetics. And that begins to mean as perceptions only, while their joints of bodies and of acts go largely underthought. People everywhere underplay the seriousness of the everyday when a festival comes to town in every bookstore.
My creed, of course, is that the ordinary is not a fantasy. Common sense with luck. When the broad scale’s laid out, we find eddies of agreement in scars, also pulsing, distant stars. A map that dissolves makes our hands involve other people’s memories of times we’ve never touched or nowhere go. People are there in the absence. What we call “language,” “society,” “self” is upsurging, slowly collecting vomit and squirt of stuff—all metaphysical gestures called “names” which do not name or mark or tell, but daily meditation. Open a space within the well. We call the upswell the “field.” Our “life.” This “city.” “Now.”
And then the solidity sways.
We come back into the worn comfort.
These freed from Philosophies capital “P” are zones of reference. Are
humilities,
ironies that put all concepts off. The way of the plain
tethers which moral sense is close to it,
quivering.
The bend of things is made of leaning.
But we are also aching and most as we go along. We come upon it after the fact. Our bodies do fool up and throughout.
This time, it was an auditorium inside a club for faculty and graduate students.
Part athletic center, concert hall, every space was near blacked out.
People moved through the dark around what few lamps there were—
emergent,— or emergency?—lights . . .
One of my old advisors was there talking vociferously about how to manage a charitable board in transit with a British colleague with whom he—cheerfully—disagreed.
At stake was a philosophy of philanthropy.
Should I have told him that we are headed toward the “post-human”? I went through corridors with shifting students, adult, pressed in that half-made mode we call “bright tutelage.” It was a veritable sampling of the books to come.
The lockers sweating with steam and the dormers half asleep in the hall with a toothbrush.
I climbed toward an auditorium again high up inside a balcony.
More people were there this time but still the stage was dark.
It was a carnival inside, a very mellow party of subdued talk, but you could feel the anarchic excitement in low, focused tones.
Time is on my side, and so I dig my own grave.
This is the kind of view that can get you loaded.
But the question is
with what? My poetry
is no alcohol, zone
of my flesh.
Later, we talked about marriage in the fading, winter noon.
The final time, I was in a synagogue, largest in the city, full-up with people who talked in different groups among many levels of seats, the balconies staggered, shuffled, pillars blocking views, but multitudes of possibilities presented themselves each in side-conversation.

I lost my friends as we found our places. I suppose that happens when we all grow up. But there were others in the rows next over curious about my leanings. And I remember feeling nervous that I would be found to be unchosen.
The shifting weight of self is unforgiving when understanding is needed of a sort.

It swings effortlessly from the limbs of mind, but there beneath the intellect, the orchard inside the roots and in the soils, shifting life. I shush in the dark, between lights.

My mouth is underliving. It dismembers things before I think them. *Saltines* or *Somerset, Cadavar, or colospecnic.*

I’ve been reading journals — the odd quarterly touted for its sound and sense. City made of *scrape.*

But the day is mild in seven-o’clock sun.

It’s better to be unmade by the lime-green hush of the forest.
The climb was made not knowing
that the divine is clown.

No, I am not better.

In Syracuse, New York, the literary mind
is wounds not
tops on cherries sinking lower into cream.
Finite mercy loves the dark.

& I run uphill in a memory along a street

nothing more than youth and nowhere the either side of which is heaven.

Where’s comfort?

This place that’s ever moving — a shifting mark.
I was sitting on our couch at 616 DeMong. An early hour. We will be wedding in three days. I’m unready.
I CARRIED MY TEETH
he abandoned the slow, ascetic suffering in the solitude of dim offices

early morning on a bare and blinded road by headless sun

... steerless, he swerved &

the swamp's smell sifted through the chassis

space of glass s—

steam, breath

solar

zero
I CARRIED MY TEETH
There was a valley beneath the emptiness.
It lay round and cool as night fell in purple time.

Neighboring houses had clapboard sides
when she froze. The golf range hadn’t been built.

There 1800 feet compacted inside green paint
while outside, a big tree.

The wind, whine of appliance

HE

She climbed the tree

* * *

SHE

the defiant

* * *

HE

* *

Forty years hence, her head still struck concrete.
In the evening,
she’d tense each day at that time.

* *

I left the valley in my car.

I’d found emptiness.
I CARRIED MY TEETH

*
I love the atmosphere higher than the lights of the city. 
It’s warm with the sound of rain 
straining the universe to consider 
the gamma rays of iniquity. 
What small portion of the problem 
can we consider in our rooms? But 
the warm, red memory of the origin 
pulses inside my mind 
and fills my body with time—
When I let go of the bad,
it is good.
When I remember the winter,
it is slight.
Tell me where the cars are sliding past values,
and I will think about how we can listen.

There is not much to be said about categories;
they keep us from what is unique,

but they protect the unconditioned.
Forest person, wood-lined in the cabin of your thoughts,

do you remember the body you used to share?

High along the altitudes where the ice caps break
small fissures design figures of a coming life.

You anchor your teeth in night,
sing flat melodies in a soothing voice,

child of age,
finite circle,

strife’s disappearance from the stars.

& “we” was well invented, we
were faded mosses along the rocks & lichenened shores,
wave-ended, froth begun.

Please do not tell me that in a certain “our” inside the hourless space of dark
you don’t reach upward and inward at once like an arborescent shell beneath the canopies of pines.

The tedium we carry in our daily habit of rest evaporates like birds that seek new climes—