

## Coda: After the thermal devices

After the thermal devices a cold war of nerves  
some and some of the youngest brightest *etcetera*  
tried to be cool with and some didn't come back from

grad school dropouts  
hipsters country boys  
GIs pacifists

each to his own self taking  
what he could hear in his master's voice  
high pitch or low falsetto

or basso profundo sharp  
as an accidental inhalation  
or flat as a city street

familiar spirits airs apparent  
immediate in the word  
made world made *templum*

the first generation in ages  
without benefit  
of classical education

the lonely crowd between their ears  
listening to itself  
reiterate itself

all means of making a living  
the academic most obviously  
means to political suicide

distasteful in the extreme  
to a fledgling consciousness  
wanting to consider itself

free from, of, to  
in the sense that America  
promised we the people freedom

speech movement thought conscience  
more than mere opportunity  
to be a dead president

in somebody else's pocket  
changing hands in a bloody market  
owned by a vicious bankers' trust

where interest lies in *status quo*  
pursuit of treadmill happiness  
on an easy installment plan

romantics all inclined to believe  
that poetry is about loss  
suspecting that reason is *contra natura*

that vision intuition *poesis*  
exceeds mere rationality,  
that something like intelligence

or Shelley's *unchangeable forms*  
*of human nature* remembered  
through metaphoric and metamorphic

rearrangements in the mind of the people  
our everlasting repository  
is carried by saws sayings gnomes

and old wives' tales into action,  
that politics is linguistic  
a branch of ethics and an art

subject to aesthetic custom  
government by the fittest *viz* those  
qualified to have an opinion

a dispensation of social groups  
to achieve the greatest degree  
of individual happiness

gladly confessing when challenged  
a soft spot for Paterian tastes  
in passionate intensity

*intensity* Yellow Book code  
for a spiritual dimension  
a tensile enthusiasm

all arts aspiring to music

even though it come to be  
caterwaul and cacophony

the individual the measure  
of all things an epicurean  
sensitivity to presence

present at the focus where  
the greatest number of vital forces  
unite in their purest energy

war-torn in the womb, eyeball  
to eyeball *mano a mano*  
twitter of ghosts in the narrow cell

unabashedly isolated  
in the midst of urbanity  
fiercely individual

subjects subjecting their own will  
to measures disciplinary as men  
of the better kind are said to do

while hoping to escape the utter self-  
consciousness the solipsism  
at the end of his *Renaissance*

by participation in the new  
order of things bequeathed by remote  
laws of inheritance vibrations

of long past acts informing  
the general consciousness said to unite  
past and present individuals

to make the non sequiturs  
make sense by fiat leaps of faith  
dint of personality

instant by instant: each line  
each image a new coupling  
each to each *instanter*

dead air from painted caves  
a whiff of gull-pecked cod

left too long in the sun

Dionysian transport  
Emersonian soul-light  
imagination all but worshiped

believing like Childe Harold before  
he knew better that it may be  
the last and only place of refuge

*freedom* in an existential sense  
*love* under the circumstances  
allowing opacity to others

descent as immersion in the lost voice  
a *felix culpa* investing return  
with airs of triumphal ascendance

polymorphous word play  
mind games stage directions  
ludicrous perversity

from do your own thing expressiveness  
to Kitchen Sink School pastiche  
pinning up what comes out in the wash

looking for a way out from between  
unannounced instant extinction  
and being nickel & dimed to death

a poetry of key changes  
inspired improv performances  
mystery words blown free

more emotional than discursive  
the argument less legible  
than oral less logical than tonal

art a crutch to be thrown away  
when at the top of the winding stair  
built with alphabet blocks

true consciousness is truly reached —  
epiphany theophany  
*satori* peak experience

or what you will the sublime  
non-discursive primordial state  
amniotic suspension

satisfaction fulfillment  
at-one-ment unity  
of the self-consciousness in question

bundled in its touchy-feely manner  
with a sense of accomplishment  
achievement mastery

an egoless egotism  
ordinarily considered  
to be a contradiction in terms

self-expression less a goal  
than a be all and end all  
foregone conclusion

beatification of atomistic  
individuality  
one self & one's cat

family friends community  
last resort & refuge  
shooting up under the radar

the whole mental gamut —  
ideal symbolic formal real  
intellect reason dreams

emotion memory feeling  
archetypes tokens presences  
evaluation exchange deposit —

as a way to escape and shape  
domination of mass public  
impersonality

a chaos troping through history  
but for that capacity  
the Greeks called poetic

to imagine define form

intuitions concepts reasons  
liquid glass within the flame

language not an arrangement  
of abstract ideals but a parent to culture  
voice establishing relations

*out of a mouthful of air* sd Yeats  
divinity *ex nihilo*  
*ex voto ex machina*

*Man most real in speech* not deeds  
sd Dr Williams imagination  
the tool to achieve reality

intuitive syntheses  
the mouse hole at the bottom of death  
through which we escape

*things* secure in their own perfections  
intensifying our perception  
of what it means to be alive

so little depending after all  
upon the load of horse feathers  
piled on a lawn ornament

beside plaster barnyard fowl  
glazed over with good intentions  
on the road from the civic hospital

the town where how anyone lived  
a pun of nostalgia on syntax  
in hopes of getting something for nothing

a consciousness say from *kitsch*  
dance music from fiddlesticks  
a timeless here and now

energies or moral forces  
inherent in acts of perception  
a new world always new

a poetry of forgetting, the mind  
released from the old subserviences

to history: no recurrence

no prior experience  
reverted to or recuperated  
a poetry of revelation

centripetal illumination  
without memory rhyme  
or geometry that jettisons restraints

on rhythmical balance insists  
on unpredictability  
pulverizes imagery

abandons verse itself that angelic  
ceremonial of beginnings  
and endings the ground of wisdom

the entire justice of prosody  
the signs and spells that allow the mind  
to forget the blank of unknowing

a poetry classroom taste  
was manufactured for by post-war  
university networks

teachability the main  
poetic excellence — *Nothing*  
*too subtle, Paradox,*

*Irony* — concrete image  
tone and texture *sans* context  
explicated on one side

of uniform-size white paper  
with wide margins but white space  
otherwise at a premium

the mystery thus to be found at the top  
rung of the one-way ladder  
the spiritual uplift

available to the better student  
who reading the limits of verbal cognition  
comes to grips with metaphor

solitary communions with absence  
form with no content  
the absurdity of which

romanticism gone to pot  
readily apparent to some  
who rejected idealism

dismissed utopian solutions  
though well aware that their notion of self  
their sense of a private I

was outdated in the real world  
of hydrogen and neutron bombs  
where language itself is bridle and whip

for a system whose massive institutions  
pervasive mass media  
mass of collective identities

eliminate the private domain  
so make the individual  
who speaks at all complicit

with the existing oppressive structure  
leaving the erstwhile poet to choke  
in a surplus of verbal capital

disillusioned liberals  
torn between resistance and reaction  
transfixed by pluralism

splitting the cultural from the social  
blaming the first for the ills of the second  
confounding cause and effect

so what since they resigned from it  
they call *adversarial culture*  
can be denounced in the marketplace

with some credibility  
reaction and liberalism teamed up  
in defense of the *status quo*

so the political economics



their sector enjoys can  
with as much right be affirmed a freedom

in the fact that nothing works  
or totally works so anything goes  
even the atrocities —

of which was born an articulate cadre  
of self-styled revolutionaries  
convinced the mother tongue is disposed

by hegemony to keep the public  
dumbed down with blood and money  
a dead end running on schedule

so think it their poetic duty  
to radically obfuscate poetry  
in order to save it

declare it political as if  
problematizing reference  
absolved them from institutionalized

social meaning as if deforming  
meta- and para-linguistic codes  
let them reach the unthought

as if multiplicity of meaning  
allowed by precise opacity  
could come to be taken for granted

and so be of less interest  
than how to treat the poetic text  
as a force field that includes diverse

discourses or conversations  
free to comment on themselves  
each other or on pertinent

political and social events  
not just to contest the aggressive  
linear overcertainties

of naive language but to confront

the processes that deliver  
multiple meanings of every meaning

in order to slow possibilities  
for sense to be constructed to produce  
impossibility

as if preprogramming culture  
would let them formulate  
the previously unthinkable

ecstasies of the ear sold short  
for the eye's distinct silences  
various oedipal feet

double time half time  
running open field in place  
to call on Grandpa in his cell

notwithstanding  
letters on white sheets  
bound in cover stock

reflective alienation  
ironic symbolization  
deliberate incoherence

apocalyptic special  
neoscholastic pleading  
for personal significance

looking for unity  
among equals talking  
to each other

if  
even  
that

£

Trying for peace in our own time

peace that comes from communication  
peace would be nice, yes?

that the belligerent god  
find himself once and for all  
spent in the arms of the goddess

together please with some understanding of what to be  
human is, the ignorant inclination towards slaughter  
of innocents it finally is

rounding up to the nearest zero the inconvenient  
facts of life, confining the numberless things  
occupying the mind — yours, mine, the gods' —

attempting by a clean sweep of the premises to get  
to the bottom of things as if a blank slate were better  
than any conceivable state of affairs, were purity

beyond the finest not to say finite  
mindfulness of nature human as it were  
being what it is what it will be

*etcetera*

were piety beyond the sense of sanctity  
immediately preceding the entrance of airy nothings  
(daemonic, to be sure, earth still clinging)

onto the stage of divinity: presences  
with personalities and names (some my newt  
some of indeterminate immensity)

the luminous spot coming up as the numinous fades  
into the soundtrack some semblance of ultimate  
disorder caught in the act of composition

*etcetera*

as if intellect plus sensitivity  
to *verba* were a sign of moral superiority  
empty pockets sure proof of fiscal genius

as if being possessed of artist's eye ear  
touch a scholar's nose a master's birch-sharp tongue  
would make even one warmonger pay attention

as if intuition resolve and grace would in fact  
align conception intention feelings thoughts and action  
with the fortunate nature of the universe

as if being self-reflective not to say  
inverted consciousness watching itself disappear  
were to go out of this world not to say of mind  
*etcetera*

but trying in any case

despite the legal ramifications  
the scales of blind justice tilted  
by the weight of coin in the realm

the degeneracy of the fiction  
slipped into court records  
that corporations have human rights

the presumption that moneychangers  
are by right the natural judge  
jury and jailer of everyone else

the outrageous system by which it's more  
profitable to make guns than useful  
machinery or grow grain

the ultimately disgraceful  
misconception that the state  
should borrow instead of lend

the pernicious rumor that humans  
alone among higher animals  
are congenitally to blame

though nothing is new under the sun  
trying in the ugly space between  
knowing better yet being deaf

to the whole implosive shebang to follow  
the good brother's prescription  
for Eastern medicine

*Sinceritas*  
*Caritas*  
*Humanitas*  
*Hilaritas*

*directio voluntatis*

somehow still believing  
sweetness and light go together  
the intelligible light ecstatic

knowledge knowledge in love  
honoring debts to ancestors  
(remembering those to be remembered)

sharing what of worth might be shared  
(what one's own eyes have seen  
(what one's own ears have heard

broken lines like pottery shards  
rejoined Chinese laundry tickets  
two halves of the same tally

a mind like that cobbling together  
from the matter before us (decomposing

matter that is, needlework  
unraveling, a ring of shells

among the bones the fabric gone  
only her forms remaining

a field of ample interest  
a cast of sufficient amplitude

an age-old vocabulary  
to think in here now

things of moment seen in light  
of immediate history

but time always this time  
myself always a question to myself

religion love essence expression  
always first person present

freedom without freedom from debt  
not freedom but tyranny

the natural object the adequate subject  
that government should loan not borrow

form seducing light from darkness  
*(quia impossibile est*