

Crossing Burrard Inlet – many times –
peaceful waters of the mind.

Yellow piles of sulfur, scattering of houses
in gouges, leaning east, on the low hills.
Above them the Lions' majestic
indifference, as if looking away
from the City

then the SeaBus wheels round
towards North Van City –
2 red & white Seaspan barges of sawdust –
shadows like grooves in the red sawdust
also leaning east –
towed past –

the sun prismatic on the water – on the eye,
unable to see the page – a blue glow, dazzle
follows the pen

Morning after morning
“the long habit of living” (Lewis Thomas)
& yet I feel as young as
unconsciousness can

merely part of the mix

Williams would write
a long passage of poetry
interrupted only infrequently
by prose

(& I know I will be back in the thornbushes

no idyl but the weird crisscross
of being & time – only to simply not go
& yet to be bound to go – “the descent
beckons” – the privilege
of being part of becoming

not who
I'll be, that's
less important – that's over – you can count on me

not to change – but attend
pub night, the Grizzlies season,

the next time I see Daniel

rather than being
(instantaneously, by magic)
a borderless piece of this sun-charged
air, to drift into a futile mix

unable

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What a simple test, that it be interesting
to others. Certainly the mind is, if
it descend far enough
to expose
 the darkness,
which is of most interest to others

(This is a sunny morning, bright fog to the east
on Burrard Inlet – the SeaBus with its flat bow
heading into the slip, all the passengers
in the seats, looking ahead

(& now in the shade of Lonsdale Quay –

Everyone wants to know
what you don't know, or are afraid to know.
There's no need to make anything up. I'll tell you,
and as I do, passing

through this – passing? – heading
uphill, on Lonsdale, on the 239, in the back seat –
& it's not time passing – still
there's a sense of passing, not deeper, quite the opposite, obvious, as
passing something from one hand to another, one person, *relinquishing* –

(as if our unwillingness to leave kept getting undermined
by our unwillingness to leave it alone?)

did I say, as I pass?

(I won't look back, but let you know where I am,

not to locate myself in a landscape

(*Poets in a Landscape*, book about the Romans, Virgil & Horace

(I was talking to
Melanie about Housman – he’s more like Virgil than Horace, the *Georgics* (?) –

not to be noticed, but rather to free the landscape – relinquishing – my hope for it, a true hope. So let the landscape be foreground (right now some sense of pale brick & a gas station) – & let the darkness be the background, let it be ground, & I’ll tell you – it’s no big thing, anyway, to be a person, with a kind of life, yet that’s what people are interested in, so I’ll tell you – there’s no need to make anything up,

& it’s not biography & it’s not shame – it is, in fact, the darkness as a place, an excavation – ongoing (this is something from Duncan – but I don’t know what – don’t remember – which poem) excavation of darkness – of self – of poetry

to bring light into darkness, fashion rooms in caves, collect treasure because it’s treasure, the ordinary taking over, by its lack of magic denying time – as if it were a puff of wind – nothing compared to the ticking of the clock which is a real clock (I bought it in Whitehorse) that sits on the black bedside table

The darkness of the mind & the darkness of death,
& in between the bright day, bright city

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This is on the 10 again, about 5 pm, Friday – my state of mind – the second martini last night got me (but it was soooo good) – after a day working at the college – office hour, lunch & teaching – students in groups doing presentations on articles by *Globe & Mail* journalists on “Between Cultures” – documentation – my state of mind?

as the bus passes over the Granville Bridge – hazy air – hazy mind too – a little of the alcohol still – a kind of muteness, as if relieved somehow of the responsibility of thought –

drink later? squirt? – reading, sleep

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Writing in the dark – outside the college – in the sodium glare through the bus window. In a state of the body – 2 beers at Poncho’s last night, early to bed but wide awake at quarter to four, obsessing – now the bus moving – downhill – to Phibbs – all the lights – city dark water reflecting bridge traffic –

In a state of the body.

Spasms of anger.

Obsessing. Yet still at the same time rationally comparing, cause of anger vs. ? Lying in bed. Thinking. Brain going. And saying to the dark, “I can’t stop thinking of this!” (What? Of why the landlord’s rep, John, won’t paint the porch, he’s had 6 weeks of good weather. Imagining phone calls. That’s when you know your brain’s really got you.

Listening to yourself imagining a phone call. To John. Berating him, no, questioning him – listening in memory –

Sitting on the 210 at Phibbs, waiting for it to start up, & cross the bridge. And an hour ago, sitting at the desk while the students wrote an in-class essay, reading a critical work on Williams & thinking, yeah, economics, I should have something in here about economics, the New Paradigm, productivity increases.

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State of the body – body in the air – air in the city. “O my people, stop driving!” I cry, as the 22-Knight goes by, & I’m kept from getting to it by cars making left turns into Macdonald.

So it’s Woodward’s & Kits – that’s the axis, or the power (something) & Eaton’s in the middle – no, the Granville Mall, I come back to, the trees, shade trees.

This new – power shift or whatever – to the North Shore – the SeaBus – this is new.

Left brain Capilano, right brain Kitsilano.

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Fucking bank machine. Fucking banks without clocks.

And you always have to go somewhere to pee. The Bay, Pacific Centre Mall, McDonalds, the SeaBus station.

But at least here’s a bench.

And why should the clock on the Vancouver tower be ten minutes fast? & the light burned out on the minute hand.

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Why John, the landlord’s rep,
has not painted the porch
over six weeks of good weather
& now, that it’s raining,
lie in bed, obsess. Whom Mrs. B. calls
“the property manager,” or the “property
management firm” – did B. tell him
not to do it, a false economy? No, no, no,
why would he have told him not to do it,

halfway through the job, with the plywood
nailed down, was it because
I had insisted, was he just trying
to *show me* - & sitting up in the dark, say,
“I can’t stop thinking of this – my mind’s
a captive audience of my brain, doomed
to hear it out. Brain says –
I’m running this program, & you
just pay attention, lie there. Brain’s
on the phone, to John. “Doesn’t this job
ever get to first priority?” And then
another possibility (which I forget now,
some paranoid scenario) - & all the while
mind is listening (& glancing at the clock,
how much sleep lost, when have to get up),
also thinking (on its own, under brain’s
hysteria), what’s the real reason, &
comes to it – John just didn’t
feel like it. Ah, reason! Asleep
instantly