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**TRAVERSING THE LAND WITH
ROPES**

tel-let
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Traversing the Land with Ropes
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TRAVERSING THE LAND WITH ROPES

when the clouds

that's what i

*was wondering
become foil*

*for white land
like arctic seas*

*all my life
i've been looking*

*traversing the land
with ropes an*

*anchorage to trade
our skins in*

supra-ego

in the hollow of the lower back
there is a sweet spot that runs
the softest wave along the arc

glide as if this is your last wave

there is a wide sky of flat grey
do a slow crawl thru its lack of
all the bluer colors do a flip hit

a grand slam for the away team

where is it written that only the
old game is our territory home
hang from the highest yardarm

sail a tender tack beyond fault

a weightless hand escorts you
against the small of your back
putting your ass in the saddle

this is what to call home about

bird or branch?

oh say its name its
waiting for you to

it finally happened
what we hoped for

but we didn't mean
it at all didn't mean

anything of it but
for the sight itself

an honest thing to
wish or to ask for

tho the land is full
flashing from the

earth to its cloud
out over the land

wishing or hoping
out loud to a sky

yelping out loud
& wondering who

we are praying at
maybe only that

opening the heart
we shut the head

as we lift our eyes
an unforeseen bliss

of invisible resort
its sudden rapture

lowers a line that
lifts us from mind

& "when we plead
to whom do we?"

here today and gone tomorrow

in moonlight the snow sparkling
a brief second flushed with sun

though never strong in praying

like a wick gone out like a flower
named after *frédéric mistral* like

a rose set in some church's wall

to catch sight of a hummingbird
so frenziedly focused on nectar

plainly evident then forever lost

my head cocking up its best eye
somehow it comes to me to pray

o millisecond my dear confidant

clearly here but forever changed
what would ever make you stay

above america

after high school before
college i got a buddy a
summer job at a company
and the guy never left

a poet my girlfriend for
a time who could spin
logopoeic webs became
a soccer mom instead

through yr wastefulness
i rise up and not only
standing up but dancing
and chanting on charity

ranging high over this
map and its vacuousness
that goes on for miles
and blocks and valleys

even so alongside our
sun rising i crank up this
heart of mine and notice
it turns over no matter

this isn't just

still this isn't
about blame

where we lay
half awake it

finds us out
while we eat

it never cuts
through any

real appetite
may our talk

be truth but
it's only zest

we may have
felt exactly or

roundabout
the way this

pencil moves
on the paper

of our youth
what life had

obliged us to
it tickets us

in half-truths
while we idle

constant

not just speaking say
to god but being face
to face with so directly

too tired to sleep over-
tired my mother used
to say to us as children

i can't speak for others
overtired under fished
overwrought underline

between contradistinct
humans we grow up &
go onward our tongues

clinging to the roofs of
our mouths for contact
where we will at death

disappear this is enough
not sticking out calling
out the name of a friend

betelgeuse or armpit

on valentine's day on
the south horizon like
a tiny brake lite *alpha*

orionis could be seen
but we didn't dare to

in a car where we two
inmates are locked up
for now on a highway

due north our beating
hearts sound close in

i kiss there as a sister
would kiss a relic or
the ring of a cardinal

ahead of us a million
tail lites running off

still singing the song
we knew long ago at
the edge of a heaven

where by radar they'll
someday discover us

a song older than music

our father was never in
the same room with us

never mind in heaven &
in the midst of the lack

always a rehashing of our
wars like that of vietnam

or else the older ones in
europe with grey stones

& statues of the virgin
in true blue blessing it

still on crutches trying
to bum a quarter off us

all the schoolchildren
dying of insomnia cry

i don't know where i am
reaching for bluebells in

autumn that tighten up
themselves for darkness

deep blue morning glory
outside those grey walls

anywhere we are is dark
forest closing in on us

night is the last address
we ever move from now

four songs to kall

how cleverly you've deceived me
and i have been angry ever since

except in the position you stick me
you do not let me have any curses

and so i am having to exceed you

and although unlike you i have to
make do without a conniving mind

chromium balls and forked tongue

i can still fancy a future for myself
made of soft flesh and heartbreak

*

like a hillock on a
horizon i stand up
before my life now

with the world all
trees and morning
air like a bird alight

in an olive orchard
outside a city wall
coveting the inside

in the wars we're
not preventing we
are succumbing

holding him as he
whimpers onto the
town square drag

his life shortened
by conflicts our

scorns don't cure

*

getting washed only
by my crying these
windows of my eyes

on the nightly late
news about who did
which this or what

atrocities to whom &
sd that against them
or about those but

in front of a mirror
by which we look at
ourselves our faces

& names constantly
changing as weather
changes striking up

storms or a pleasant
summer day for us
to sit in at the shore

but when all is sd &
done & push comes
to scare this isn't it

ever as any window
left unwashed has
grime obstructing in

part its view & clear
water like tears runs
against all odds &

can sometimes make
(the way odds will) a
fresh view of things

*

mémère mémère sleeping
carefully alone in your red love-seat chair
we love you wake up

teach us how to dance again
how to write a rondelet
drawing our dreams in chalk

on your dark parquet

small beer

when he was a child he
never understood this

why boys no older than
he was did what we did

the rage the busted glass
ma's sudden spoiled day

at four in the morning
he now comprehends it

over him at work are the
worst and the dimmest

not able to fall asleep
he rehearses the idiom

"small beer" to himself
and wonders why as kids

we just couldn't wait to
grow up to become men

death seems more certain

than love or condolences

no matter the quality of
life of the passed buried

today in a rain that makes

everything look vinyl
the divine ground takes

our wet dirt into its part

it unifies us lay admirers
huddled across its maw

& forces us to perceive

to make a vain preacher's
words though slickened

meaningful nonetheless

like a naked boy pulling
behind him a broken toy

he was this sound body

& on Tuesday was some-
body to us but not today

when we throw him away

to pander or to strut

everything is changing
or nothing has changed

either we read well or
else we deny the signs

& at the very least it all
becomes untried again

wealth-based personal
transformation we are

still ambivalent about
a brand is not culture

it isn't even the bigness
that we object to most

it's the arrogance the
slippery rapaciousness

we are speedily becoming
defenders of more level

playing fields there's a
stigma to filthy richness

so maybe this is arguable
but it's not just bullshit

going out on the street
to demonstrate used to

be an accepted part of
an intellectual's life all

right-thinking persons
did it even though the

police made their arrests

burlesque patriotism

around each other's waists
our arms tired from longing
those three chords played
only once will never decay

always in the shadow of a
statue of a man with a gun
unexhausted out of longing
our arms happily entwined

a memorial statue of a boy
standing taller than life-size
the great chords are played
once and not ever forgotten

out of pining for the stature
of a man standing up in the
shadow of a life-size cannon
just once will never be lost

the great chords articulated
will never be lost but once
in the shadows of a cannon
of a young man standing up

the landing elegy

i.

mass-market ready-to-wear
egocentric senators singing
“god bless america” as if
their wallets depended on it

another hand-over-fist try
at failing no more than my
worst lies maybe they had
pets they cared for besides

ii.

easily mistaken for an ear
taken up into itself within
its former self all night a
beautiful girl adores him

or a dog watching the tv
it carries on in our sleep
all our rich tangible lusts
trying to cover our asses

iii.

at a burial a gravedigger a
going with the bilge water
washed up under the city
it shines its beam of light

a half moon winking eyes
offloading into the gully
out of a duck pond a giant
sun rising finding no sleep

In love with my country

i remember the dirty hall
the horrible smell of it i
remember being like that

feeling soiled and angry

yes in love with a broken

home but don't ask why
i fell in love with all of it
finally and don't ask how

broken i guess like we'd
have to first kick the ice
on top of the toilet bowl

water to break it before

finally squatting to use it

housebroken i dare say
soiled and heartbroken
and in love with every bit

but not willing to die for
it or reckless to destroy
somebody else (or their it)

for it to chock up my win

this title now being given

something left in me still
afraid and brokenhearted
fears having broached it

stake

spying a big flower in a tree
leaves me awestruck since i

as a child never had a plant

never mind a wooly pet not
to mention the world's herbs

i've never learned the names

of much less a facing down
the pending gap of future air

darker than a boarded-up slit

who of my youth was the one
who kept the shutters drawn

i wasn't able to figure out but

that was my early childhood
i used to sit in their low light

pulling darts out of my heart

darts they never knew existed
that no one else was to see i

learned after a decade or so

laying on the couch tonight
maybe the workday can slide

by but not my obligations to

help keep the world enjoyable
where do you put the blame?

my bellyaching becomes like

a basement full of gas smell
& what does this have to do

with love? zero i'd have to bet

confined to my room reading plato

1.

you don't *really* hate me
old god do you can you
really hate a boy of 18

my dad's anger mixed
up fear and frustration

2.

always secretly being 18

coda.

though unwanted this
old one in time appears
who was never me but
of late professes to be

i can't find where i end
and where he begins as
we go our diverse ways
like an out-of-date map

It was all he could do he cried

not outrageous peculiar or
quaint certainly and never

bizarre outré weird or wild

after the fun and games of
a meager diet of childhood

he was impersonating this

predictable man but always
knew acutely the lie of this

the hiss of ocean on these

freakish rocks of the beach
smooths them into pebbles

toys put back in the chest

taught by rote from crown
to toes and back up again

strain

the old graves
that the storm
rains on saves
me from going

over to piss on
yr father's store
of dead beliefs
his lobbying for

fat sensibilities
the necessity for
our pet rivalries
the feasibility of

inversely over-
valuing of bust
in proportion to
penis size just

as my dad's map
of yr thought's
contours is crap
(tho extensive)

& eyes any eyes
do wink at limits
at times & then
a map piece fits

deafening rains
tonight calling
out alien names
including mine

an aubade (or a nocturne)

you wanted the day with slits
a way to let the tomorrows in

each tomorrow though still to
be goes the exact same place

we are unmade ourselves who
try to unmake a natural world

but not unless we get how to
give ourselves to the present

otherwise our deaths forever
outrun these deft tomorrows

an awkwardness that can

always prostrate to one
another never debased

an uneasiness but not

ever bitterness an edge
to the whole matter but

relaxing into a potential

makes it interesting yes
hard too but never tired

of our unlike languages

how this delights us tho
there is always work in

ironing out exactly how

I press my ear to the wall

for a quarter century now
people have shown up for

work with our briefcases

but not with hats anymore
or anyway not nowadays

but even minus the benefit

of our hats we are still the
cortex size of our species

we cut out old newspaper

passages & surmise *now*
we're getting somewhere

the calloused hands of our

fathers are expunged & we
long to know our mothers

as we're apt to forget them

squatting side by side we
tell stories like strangers

& no longer sing having

long ago hocked our lyres
for our cutting instrument

always snipping & pricking

cutting back the roots our
leaves a color of shit now

but the forgotten song is

his own wife remembering
standing by her backbone

who serves (& serves!) the

return of her lost husband
back then anywhere that he

left his wide-brimmed ideals

with cassandra in charge

if we were true seers we'd see
beyond our noses all the way
through treachery to what to
do next with superfluous lies

we would avow them as such
keeping each day's space safe
however they've come to look
like real truths to anyone else

when you tell the truth rightly
you are never liked in fact you
are *disdained* but you bear on
yielding into the day your care

the dove / the phoenix

even when things get
bad or horrible indeed

one definition of true
manhood is *one who*

*never disturbs women
children or animals &*

for such a party there
is no going elsewhere

no escaping to safety
as if thru inwardness

he must stay in his life
& manage to find new

dreams that serve all
the living even if the

likes of such dreams
which others reckon

as impossible he has
to resurrect from ash

all that I do not know

often i can think much
farther back than this
but i'm forgetting now
forgive me my laziness

that song you sang to
me once baby sing it
again night song day
song dream song oh

the star is fading can
you hear me even so?
hadn't you noticed it?
famine war fire floods

the destruction of our
world piece by piece
we assume this is just
what it means to be a

human animal but that
isn't really the case is it?
forgive us our laziness
our not hauling pails

come sit my dear one
my soul come my love
sit and eat it with me
until the light is old

trine: money/food/sex

– prelude

instead of fish
stories round

the campfire

lighting dollar
bills before

sleeping as

appeasement
to the ghosts

– first

suffocate a fish
being careful

not to squish
it then swish it

in some butter
(utter dare)

and serve it
without clutter

on a dish
with flatware

and a knish
(noting the bear)

– (can't) second

when we were 18 we
insisted we followed

bright desire but now
it is more certainly

only self-indulgence

now when departing
our camp none of us

will claim the used
condom furling up at
the roadside saying

we have at home at
least 100 just like it

& then & then & then

then in the tundra my heart
appeared after having been

kicked in the teeth struck in
my limp underbelly of down

my baby in the dark says to
me amid my most esteemed

thoughts *i am your soul &*
heart my nonhardy viscera

sees my mind light up on it
really there but only usually

invisible like the blood thru
the vein of the feather root

a dirty thing no child could
pick up & expect to live on

in a space & time that kept
its distance knows its place

being taller i was the man in

this muddle then & am still

but we don't want to hear a
tale about that again do we

even tho looking in a mirror
he was taller by a headdress

this is a test the answers are
coming back to me yet here

a scattered mind long since
gone unto black mucky soil

you are the tundra swan in
full feather off conjuring up

bad ways or if not that bad
still shut off from light then

my saffron-colored tux

i fear the love that
moves the sun and
the other heavenly

orbits i don't feel
i'm ready for it or
i fear it is madness

yet with strokes as
fast as electricity i
try to write to sing

paeans to it while
tensions twist the
syntax of my lines

for in these times
one who resists is
not the exemplar

of anything like
the ordering of
a constellation