

## AWAKENER

There is one job I do know how to do  
it is something I do do very well  
I developed a technique without even knowing  
designed to keep you awake forever

Implementing this technique made me few friends  
people wake up in the middle of the night  
wanting to kill me if I were in their shoes  
I would feel exactly the same

If you've fallen into useless slumber  
not taking who and what you are by the scruff  
and shaking yourself a bit someone'll do it for you  
does the baby hate the hand that pounds its back  
in order to dislodge the object in its throat?

What was stuck in there was self-regard  
looking at the world with you as epicentre  
when your breath unblocked your mind was freed as well  
you became part of a constellation  
when you stopped being the sun

When you cease making your presence felt  
you join the human race or else you go on sleeping  
you can of course let the moment go  
when wakefulness beckons instead of sleep  
okay turn the other cheek and snore

I sit and watch and love you because I know you well  
not just the body's excitement but what is in your eyes  
and if I don't give up after you've tried to kill me  
it's because beyond the body I really know what's there

You have loved before and you will love again  
you are loved in this moment although you have forgotten  
the body's effervescence is not just what you seek  
the real love includes it but there's also more

The real love begins with consent to be concerned  
with the love of other over and beyond yourself  
if you can love another more than you loved even me  
I will gracefully withdraw but until that time comes

You will find me in your every waking dream  
torturing you with memory of what was what still might be  
sleep will not give you oblivion you know too much for that  
I'll keep you awake and watchful to the end of eternity

## CHOIR PRACTICE AT ST. LUKES

The church is white and simple inside  
do I remember it this way or not or has it never changed  
memory plays tricks

Here the document exists I was baptized in this church  
on May 3,1950 on June 1 less than a month later  
I emigrated to France with my parents  
I was just under ten years old

What is it that makes a child of ten  
insist on his own baptism my parents always said I forced  
it on them my father always said it was because  
I wanted to be an altarboy and swing the incense

Was it really about being a sort of actor  
or was it about something else maybe it was the only pretext  
my parents could understand at this point  
I have to admit that I don't really know  
I have forgotten almost everything from that time

But if a child forces non-observant parents to baptize him  
is it really just to enable him to put on a show  
or is there something else in play

What sounds like a herd of elephants assembles in the choirloft  
interrupting my reflection Bloody assholes I think  
why can't they go to the bar next door if they want to laugh  
and shout then a moment of silence and a song suddenly rises  
as if written in the hand of God Himself

My subliminal inheritance of Anglican hymn literature  
is now kicked into life and soars above us all  
true beauty is not the whole story but it brings us near

when we love we are rehearsing our Creator in ourselves

Whether love of beauty or love of show today it doesn't matter  
what matters is that I saw something and that I came  
to this place not to criticise but to praise

Nearly fifty years later I have kept my word  
my word artless and guileless like that child by the fount  
I was not to become the great artist that I dreamed of  
but I have never ceased to celebrate and love  
with simple words of candour I have kept my faith

## IN THE GARDEN AT ST. LUKES

After choir practice I go and sit a while in the garden  
it's sort of neglected and overgrown but beautiful  
a squirrel comes right up to me expecting to be fed  
and almost begins to nibble at my toes

Funny that no Memory remains of this amazing place  
this pocket garden like a forest in the middle of the asphalt  
garden of Eden in the midst of the West Village  
all I recall is the gym where I played basketball  
and the playground with a slide I played hockey there

I attended the school for a year or two that's all  
is that enough to consider myself a member of this parish  
the family house was sold yesterday I won't be back  
my place placeless I pray in another language now

Presumably God will not worry about such technicalities  
it's only me that feels uprooted not wealthy enough  
to maintain a residence in the yuppified West Village  
I am an emigrant in diaspora and I will die that way

If I could choose a place where I might come from  
this would be it but of course the truth of the matter  
is I don't come from here any more than I come from Paris  
all are places of secondary residence transit areas

A place to hang your hat a sort of duty-free  
where I come from is beyond all boundaries and frontiers  
a stop-off between trains  
what you or I cannot imagine  
that is where I come from