

1992

Connubial

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and signature: the hoist of flesh arrayed
on roost of skeleton. The common wisdom
is I laughed in heartlessness
or mockery: perhaps I did—
but at the long and short of it, what good
comes to, the soft and hard, the awful
fact that what's alive will rot,
what lasts can't feel. I felt

how terrible a figure
human being cuts, upon its frame.
And so the laugh like a cry from my own
perscrewed, misnailed, cross-crafted armature
rang out, outrang the meeker mourners and
polite conventioners . . . The heart

is a muscle. The tooth is a fang.
What I gave at the sight of him there
was up. What I got of humanity there
was the hang . . .

CONNUBIAL

Dream is matterless, it dips
from bounds to billowings,

laws lapse in it,
or universes swerve.

Before I had
an other at my side

there was no side: how far
can onesome go? Just being

here at hand, just being, beating
in and out of phase, you are

my bearings: touch is couch
about afflow . . .

*

(Blind comfort maybe, keeping
endlessness away. But one
is one's own zero, hole
through which the all
can plunge appallingly . . . I'm not
cut out for it: I'm for an other,
meaning hand and mind,
in sense of having
halves at all.) Perhaps I've settled

for a circumstance (our landings
broken by water, our stars by blue).
So be it. Loving's limited.
I'm saved from terrible eternities by you.