

The Sound

For Lars, In Friendship

So easily I forget the goodness
and the beauty inside of me
and outside of me too--
I'm slowing down now, winding down.
It's October. The wind falls
and breathes low on the trees
and leaves rest on the fading grass.
It's fall again.
And in the fall, the rhythms of pain
reemerge--the clasp and embrace
of trauma--and pull me down to
the almost sleeping earth, this soon
to be winter. And where do I go now.
Where do I go.

II

There is always hope, a friend told
me once. The Scriptures hold those
words too. My mind turns and I think
of some Irish monk, owning the words,
copying them down, somewhere tucked
away on a stormy, wind-whipped coast
By the North. There is always hope--
these three remain.

III

I come back to the here and now,
the almost present, yet still in the recent past,
the place of Long Island Sound. My Sound,
with gulls and tall grass which browns
and reddens in autumn. The Sound. A gray

sky, more beautiful to me, more real, more honest, than the summer Sound just two years ago. Soon, the ice will come in and the inlet will freeze and rumble as the ice cracks in on itself--I miss you, my old friend, my Sound. I miss the solitude and comfort--the bittersweet wind blowing in from across the waters.

I am here now, thirty-eight, across the Bridge and the River, not too far, but so far from what I knew and felt. Recovering myself and the Sound, and the loves of my love, the four and the one and me-- orbiting each other, singing in unison, but each distinct and whole and strung for completeness. Yearning to be heard, being heard, striving to be heard Again and again, in the arms of each, one to each-- a universe, here, across the space and time of waters--my Sound, in me, in you--four-- Always, and forever.

IV

We live in a poem,
alert, aware--begging
us for action.

I wonder, I wonder
what will come on
the other side of
things--

The ocean of love
infinite, moving
and shaping itself
perpetually in love--

Grow with me, my love,

in love.

The sun rises over the
Sound, seabirds flying,
the tide in and out,
as it has always done,
and always will do--
until the breath of this
heaven fades, the earth
is put out--and all things
are made new,
and we laugh again.

To laugh again is to begin
again, not fresh,
not new, but a beginning,
not a negation, not a
forgetting, but an understanding

Releasing the pressure of
creating, *ex nihilo*--
the words are there--

just as the beach is,
as the stones are--
all is there, waiting to be
Received and rediscovered,
again, for the first time,
again.

V

All the world is a breathing--a continuation
falling from somewhere else
and released again
back into the world,

again and again, without ceasing, again

and again.

My life is not my own, it is a beginning
taken from the air, brought into me
then released back into the air,
again.

I love you and I love this world,
(and I breathe in hope, and it
mixes with the fear, my
fears, and we keep breathing),

there is only this moment--
you and I, and the breath
we breath, and it all is a
breathing, and a beginning,
and a recovery, and a starting
again.

The deep sea of sorrow within
me, my lungs, my chest, my gut,
and yours too, to mix with joy
and laughter--

we've pushed open
the windows, so let us
breathe again. And toss
our laughter out into the world--
an affirmation,
an affirmation, of all that is
good, of all that is us, of all that
will be, forever and ever,
Amen.

Poem for My Father

*If I sit and listen,
Will the words
Come and fall upon
My heart, my ears;
If I stand, will I find
Them among the stars.*

I have to concentrate to listen,
The lines break--
My father visits this Sunday.
Sundays, the day of rest, but
for me at least a day of
frozen frenzy.

Somehow in my brain
you and God and father
and faith got crushed
down into something mighty
and impressive, like some weight
flung like a hammer throw.

I'm struck dumb and mute.

What to do now, what to do when
we're here now together and I'm
aware. What to say or feel.

I pick up a stick and try
to beat away
the ghosts. I listen now
despite the years of weight and burden.
I think of the ocean that sends in hope,
wave after wave, day after day, year
after year, years at a time.
And I wait. And I listen, again,
for the first time.

I speak myself to myself,
I want you to hear me.
I want to write you into the
history of my life, knowing that
you wrote yourself into mine,
too. The words were already
there, like stones under the water,
being made smooth like
the touch of marble.

So I hear you, fear you now again
with adult ears, I see you at the
edges with my adult eyes.
You're older, slower, your feet
hurt when you walk--you who
controlled so much and held it
all under your thumb--it could not
grow there, all the life that tried
to breathe. Put your hands down
and let them rest by your sides,
or let go and turn your palms
to the sky, to receive whatever it is
you strived so hard to find from the
pulpit or even at the desk in your study.
Or maybe go to that same study, look
to the shelf, and gently take down the
idol you placed there of yourself.
Go gentle, go gentle now and let it down
softly. And this night, this night I miss
this time with you--my thoughts, these
words, this love,
My father.

I Saw Nana Dancing on the Moon Last Night

To Lucy

What was she doing there
I wonder. You seem
to wonder, too. You told
your mother you saw Nana
dancing on the moon last
night, and I wonder if Nana
saw you, too, all the way
down here, on the grass
looking up at her with your
deep green eyes. I wonder.

And I wonder what's next,
and what will come of all this--
will I dance, will you dance,
will we all dance together,
there, on the moon some day.
I don't know.

But I think I know that
we can all dance here
and now, where the earth
meets the sky--so that you
can say *Mommy, Daddy,*
I'm happy now.
And we can say,
we're happy now, too,
baby.

And I wonder still,
is the *now* a waiting
or an arrival, here and now,
In this time and place.

Or does it matter?

This Year

We walk the lake, you following
two children, I, one.

We follow them in silence.

The sun sets on us and goes
away. Soon, it is blankets and
toothbrushes and prayers,
all the little things of bedtime
that mean so much.

And later, our boy and two girls,

They all sleep shirtless for it is August.

They are in their room, and we
Go to ours. We travel through
the night and come out at daybreak,
Still, but singing.

Our sleep is a going through,
A getting there.

And our love for them, for
ourselves, for each other,
is a journey there, to where
we all love each other
into new possibility.

We learn to trust the language
of living, the language of loving.