

## Horizons

### *The Street*

Morning froze  
about the leaf—  
not first,  
not last to fall  
and the street. But I

was there. It was  
the pre-dawn hesitation you know  
and can never know, interred  
beneath the tombstone traffic light,  
flickering—the world

when the merry-makers are  
gone, driven on in acrid gusts  
with the plastic embers of  
weary revelry—tangled  
in drifting fellowship, an urban chant

seeping tender discord through the  
viscid snarl of the moonstruck mob, brewing  
the fading stench of whiskey-throngs  
that sweat. The recovered host

do not yet march to toast  
tea sweets and coffee, or trot to work, beyond  
the wind's death beaten by the dove's wing  
and the lilting sparrow's song. Before Sunday

pelts the pavement, arousing  
its heaving torpor, but the moon-caress had sublimed  
its unmoving grace, peeled  
pearly fingers from the city-choked throat

spilling cracked asphalt

black beneath abandoned sky, cut loose  
to freedom from the beating heart  
of light—but pleading

with me pleading  
for the pulse  
of industry, destiny, and the circulation  
of its transit I could not revive, had not  
been given—resuscitation

of the artificial breath  
of exhaust, cigarettes, toothless scavengers  
or fights—or the leaves  
embalmed by lamplight: to be

worn and wearing soles  
of deceitful feet, gleeful paws, steady treads and tires  
of bearing its load  
but shakes beneath the creeping chill  
and shrinks—from being

itself, from being  
alone. We stood

an endless communion: decaying kings desperate  
for *an end!*—too certain  
of reaching it. Deprived,  
as we were, of circumstance  
by circumstance, I was not

there—wherever it is  
that there might have been (Ithaca, Jerusalem, the DMV)  
nor on my way, the street  
whose end all thought to be our beginning, whose beginning would be  
our end. So where could I be

but here? And what could there be  
but I and the street? There can never quite be here,

even if *dare we hope?* here  
there should someday be— and then

it was. Thought gave way  
to final vacancy, stiff limbs dissolved  
in the way that gave way to nothing  
which was everything  
it had—and all is still that is at all,  
though still is all—here—*here*

the virgin street lies

an empty promise.

Then, there is only the street.

Then only is there the street.

Then the howl of the wind-cracked corpse,

and footfalls.

*What's Fair*

I'm sorry a poet told me  
you have to be an ocean,  
that really isn't fair—  
let the next boy know that

fair is the way you balance  
two sheaves of sun over your shoulders  
squeezed through a slouching door-nook, enough  
for the afternoon and more

when we run low— where no clouds come  
beneath these slow-rolling chimney-breaths

that gather your earth to succor this  
retching pneumoniac: laded low with mudded fog-sweats

of his trek's endurance as the water falls  
outward and downward to distant seas. When he finds  
A home in the thatched light of a wood's  
ever green generosity, where the hearth

fire hugs him twice around and fails  
to let him go, let him know that  
for all his heat the sea  
gives back only salt.

### *Horizons*

#### I

Between a man and the sea  
winds only the feathery spine  
of this transient serpent: tingling  
links of lightning dissolve  
in droplets of air torn everywise  
by wars of the savage winds, dispassionate whims  
of their pale, pock-marked, implacable mistress  
and the wavering health of our own adventure—  
are your feet wet as mine?

At the tinsel hour, when the waves fill our throats  
with frothy death, will you curse  
your inevitable homecoming  
and the inestimable halls  
of your captor's hospitality?

#### II

We have carved great tunnels  
through granite mountains,  
eradicated plagues, drained swamps, piled rocks

to the sun and leaped the broad shoulders of ocean  
like a puddle in the playground. My knife  
can peel the fire from any man's eyes.

But to coax life  
through the veins of one humble leaf  
with all the resource of science  
and love of a thousand mothers  
is the shaman's dance at the edges of drought.

### III

Even sculptor and poet, even burdened with laurels, can only mangle  
works of mightier hands: tear hair from Helen  
that we might admire  
its fineness, his creation.

Yet the blush on a single rose clipped at morning  
clears the roof of the bed-ridden mind, may just whisper  
in dew of infinite brine, heather on hills that stretch to the sun  
where this lonely moment of light engulfs an intractable void.

### IV

And when I close my eyes  
the forest of larks is struck finally dumb.

### *Ding an Sich*

To sit at the window and watch  
as the snow returns, filling her footsteps  
who will not come back. To scour the alley,

shaken by a few leaves, the derisions  
of memory scattered, catching fondly  
at tatters of the weary past

and the errors of art. To gaze through the glass  
and barely descry the lines

of a noble chin, eyes that never seemed so hollow

when last they took her in a rainy glen  
and were overfull  
with laughter. Snuff the porch light

and wait: the guttural spouts  
are draining. Forget the pattering bells...

*Poetry*

The art of  
                  what is not, said.  
The art of what *is*,  
                  not *said*.  
The art of what is not said.