

A drunk rolling home from the feast of the world
 locked up against this heaving shore,
I sing
 this last hard song before oblivion
 or silence sets in, the heroic chant, a battle
we lost
 on earth, was it won in heaven? The rolling
 barbed wire curve keeps us in, and still the birds
fly free —

Did you see them, did you see those pure arcs
 ascending when we lifted the roof from their cage,
freedom
 their flight, never caged or locked in, destiny
 blind to birth from an egg, did you see them
flash straight
 up through the trees and away, not circling even
 once below, to heaven they ran, as they should, as
my heart
 flies now with you, we two locked tight
 in separate parts of the egg, and God, God
alone

Sets us free beloved, God alone sets us free wherever
 we land, no matter how drunk with love or sobered
with in-
 justice; sing to me beloved, sing as the shell
 of the world bursts and cools around us, the shore
recedes
 behind, before: they will not know us here, yet
 perhaps they will know us there, straight up and beyond
the trees.

We have been to the desert beloved, whose brown
 and ochred palette was luminous in rising or
 setting suns, we have been to that desert beloved, where
 mountains and valleys erupt passages of pure
 light, a solitary horseman flying his wingèd horse,
 a prayer unconditional, that desert beloved, that one
 we have seen where roving tides of dust settle filters,
 reddish brown stains between this heaven and

this earth. Nothing lives and nothing dies or everything
 lives and everything dies at pointblank range, the re-
 creative flash which looks sometimes like continuity and

sometimes like dissolution, protonic absolutes to entertain
 our trust. The desert came first in such substantial dreams
 it could not be denied, then the unsubstantiated wake-
 fulness: and you beloved, you my witness, my testimony
 for both, flying horseman mounting the absolutes on trust
 alone, tell me now where the desert radiance breathes if your
 palette runs dry, tell me now if time exists or fails
 to exist, tell me beloved, which desert is real?

For years beloved, for years I shut myself
away — and now they have shut me away:

It's about the same beloved, except
they shut you away too — and I keep

Remembering pink and red *difla* flowering
everywhere, the sweet, pointed scent

Of jasmine in the morning, and a single, pungent
sprig of overwhelming tuberose at night.

My God, my God, are these Your tears?

Down, down beneath the world sticky
waters of the Dead Sea licked against our feet
leaving a residue which had to be scrubbed
away. Willingly enough we went, down past Shu'aib's
armored grave to valleys that open below, then
the flat, palm lined Jordan Valley where hot, wet

nights breathe a sweet embrace no one is allowed
to refuse, past demanding knots of soldiers,
reminding us those lights across
the way shine in occupied lands, down,

down beneath the world where injustice licks,
a sticky residue nothing can scrub away,
where the dispossessed and homeless, armed like
David with nothing but stones stand alone.
That's the way it is beloved, down beneath the world
we stand alone, embraced sometimes, but alone.

Beloved, acquainted as you are with
the all
too apparent frailty of this body,

Let me introduce you to the heart,
the all
too reckless frailty of this heart.

Tossed around in our half dementing world of time,
 and lost like falling leaves in a heavy autumn
 rain, I can no longer maneuver for position, nor will
 I strain to place my back against the wind;

let whatever comes come my God, only do not, I beg
 You, forget me altogether, and do not altogether
 hide Yourself from me. You see, even as I search or seek,
 inside, everywhere, I find nothing but self-

annihilating images hanging from the roof of the world.

Grey November days peel back one by one against
 the play of time, solar dust blowing consecutive
 hell upon hell while the sycamore slowly strips to a near-
 by bell, that insolent anonymity intoning life sometimes,

death sometimes, an invariable, unhurried beat, our
 breath measured out carefully, saving it up for one last
 run against the odds. My God, my God, I have scarcely begun
 to understand the space between the notes, a silence

that savors equally, inside and out, wind and time and death.

Do not stay for tears beloved, do not stay
 for anything as trivial as tears,
 Listen, only listen I beg you, to a note,
 the single, pure note, the clockwork perfection,

Children who hear and do not weep but
 chime the perfect intunement. I can't, I can
 No longer accept the fine humiliation of tears, do you
 hear me, do you, does anyone know

The betrayal, the seduction which promises yet
 only betrays? And if we go, together, alone, or as
 One to meet the great King, will He, will He know me, or will
 He say, 'I do not know this woman, take her from

Here, take her from here and let the children come.' When
 time has damned up our resources, when every flooding
 River runs dry, will one tear become a thing of value, will
 you not then stay for something as trivial as tears?

Validation springing
up like grass,

Like tickets for tears,
like keys for
Every locked particle
frozen in the ice

And snow of our wintering
lives, a luminous
Recitation the queening
of this unyielding land.

When a soft wind blows
beloved, subtly from the south-
West, plundering the prisons
of time inside and out,

Find a passage through
sorrow, consider the eagle,
Weightless, a mere
stain in the sky, disdainig

This earth, wingtips on
automatic, suspension like
A static flame, like a
prayer, like subatomic dust.