

MAL MORGAN

EMPTY SPACES

for Bryce Vissel

Yes today
again

I visited my empty spaces,
and filled them with innumerable things
— with the soliloquy of a single mandolin
and the celebration of a double violin concerto,
with the broken shoelace of all my travels
and with many prunus trees in full and
astonishing blossom, with the aesthetic twist
of a slender green leaf and its grub
hanging by a silver thread.

If I do not
fill my spaces they become abysmal.
And I fill them with things of this earth
and with the nature of imagination,
with the Greek amphitheatre of an ancient myth
the drama the same the players changed,
with glass houses precariously perched
on the dome of the toppling hourglass,
with melodramas I invent which disappear
before reaching the corner of a startled thought,
and with words which echo
down corridors of exploding vocabularies.
I fill them with visions of white piazzas
and bronze statues in gardens
where I have never lain in sunlight,
with stories of poets knights and bullfights
where the sun and the blood and the pain are one.

And when I have visited
and filled my spaces
I am somewhere where I was not before.

And I cannot say where I was
or where I am now,
only that I am here.

HELEN ALLAN

ANNIVERSARY

Over the wine we both sat silent. Nothing
seemed to be left unsaid although
there were whole languages of love we'd
never mastered
for all our married years.
Something of this
even our silence shouted and
we were ashamed
before a restaurant of prattling lovers.

I passed the salt although I knew you took none
'Nice place' I ventured. 'Nice prices too' you sighed.
That was it then. The candle flame between us
stood vertical upon the breathless air.
Two languid goldfish
drownd in a tank nearby
and from the drooping roses on the table
not a single petal fell.

Suddenly you looked at me as one who sees a stranger
and is surprised to see him.
'I'd love to have met you if we'd never married'
you said absurdly. Or did I dream you said it?
'I too. So many things I long to tell you!'
I said, perhaps only wished to say.