

Being & Time

For Charles Roberts

1.

Dry dirt bones
 a dun-coloured spine
of dusty vertebrae ridge
 & rib this country
 to a blue-horizoned line
rounding out this point in space
 which also lasts in time.

 Here the need for touch to define
is paramount
 to shape this body into being
to make the borders
 & this beginning
 where the names can be spoken
with all the distinction of a new-found tongue.

2.

Musty pawpaw light had stained his skin
when it was licked one thickening hour's length
 & his heavy flesh was sucked
in the moist cavity of that humid afternoon
 but even then those minutes held
the black seeds which clustered insect-dense
to be our end foretold.

3.

Calling out
for this is the way of it
seeking in duration
the presence of another
the answer to a name
& one sunlit
amongst all the clamouring wavelengths
who beats with a radiant pulse
& who shall be warm in the night

whose hand's demonstration
will close a shape
& mould the flesh
to speak those words which must repeat
& give those kisses so distinctly now
they print existence on the air
& hold the stresses of our being
between the self's own enclosure
& the entry
of another world into
the eyes
or eased between oiled & parting skin.

See Me I Am Burning

My father!

 See me I am burning!

My arm is a torch held up.

My flesh fuels flames

 and I consume

myself substantial.

How soon

 will cold and ashes

blacken and replace

 this fierceness that I give?

I know I have an end

I cannot make it more.

The Kings of Edom (Fragment)

And the kings of ancient time were dead, and their crowns were found no more; and the earth was desolate.

Sifra de-Zeni'uta

i.

These are the Kings that reigned in Edom
in the broken hollows
of the waste volcanic fields.

These are the Kings of Edom
according to their habitations
in the land of their possession.

Who has constructed kings, inscribed kings,
and conjectured kings,
from the sound of buzzing wings
and shapes in smoke
with many noon destructions on the heated air.

These are the Kings of Edom who died.

ii.

Whose darkness is a black fire
which can be felt
and a black honey
which is concealed
in his night-sweats,
his swollen tight skin,
his tender glands,
his guilt,
and his disease,
for the secret act of his infection
takes place in silence.

iii.

Heavily lifting up from out of it
his slower eyes, his frown, his head
rising up against
 the black-muffled weight
of early death.

 This one,
 my bitter cry for him

Who will never father children
Who will never grow old in his house.

The press of leaden time surrounds him
draws his minutes to stagnant hours
 waiting without motion
and before that final end he makes another
 closing off the possibilities of day.

iv.

All unknowledged things must come to take their due
at the day's terminus
when all he would not be is all he has to lose
and in this final moment
knows himself as error
and his even perfection still
 is error's overturn.