

MEMORIAL

I don't want a memorial of love
that someday another man or woman will see,
opening a book or wandering under a hill,
and say: "Of him, we learn his name, and she...
he left her blanker still—
whether it was through the error of restraint
or through how little art can do or will,
who knows? But in any case this, so faint,
blank almost, is their memorial,
that we can only make what may please us of".
I don't want a memorial of love.

EARLY SPRING

If flute song breaks on the stone wall
guarding the garden, the shutters, green,
open and the red slatted gate
does not, if blossoms start to come

on apple trees whose boughs are black
like cracks or scrawls across an old
picture or one just ill begun,
then let this casual, unforeseen

elegance of chill errors call
your blood—a plasma not, I think,
unlike the one that hides here. Yes,
spring's cold. Its mud gives way, yet binds

white grasses. And will those high elms
ever rafter the curls of gold
volume that memory or a dream
assigns them? Still, bring me the wet

on bark and soil. A marsh within
is what stirs here, when we receive
the sour runlets, on the slope the print
of haunches where a young flight paused.

THE SHORE

A woman walked by the empty sea,
and the only stars there: the lame molds
of her footprints, and longed-for
crowds that used to crowd
that frigid beach, those waters only motion
keeps from becoming ice: tritons,
and cod swarms on a black wave
smothering in their congress
of mortised and tenoned bodies, and graeae
lassooing the grampus and narwhal,
mermen mating with and satiating
mealy tunny. And she thought:
without that abolished company, here
is eternity—silver scallops
of sand in oblique suns at cold
golden-misty sunups, and a stunned
mind filled with nervous water.

THE SOURCE

What would silence be? The song
of a tempered shining, almost too small
to hear? – the song itself of the sun,
hushed as it is by distance, and so, hidden
in the ear's ignorance, but in good time
for no reason it comes to notice and then
plays beautiful by day, more beautiful by night,
and more, more beautiful by day?
Would it be like the furnace
noise out there, next to the cruel star,
where any listener who came near
would burn to a clinker, the sound that here,
beneath our air, where the listeners are,
becomes a song as soft as nothingness—
the central power I claim beginning
outside me, far, and dwindling its fire
into my core?