

Three Poems · *W. S. Merwin*

WAYS

Not to be
but to be seen
like a magazine

not to be seen
but to be
like a spirit

to travel
but not to come home
like money

to come home
everywhere
like a star

AT THE SAME TIME

So maybe in fact there are only
our contemporaries
and we learn from them listen to them
talk only to them
because there are no others

do the dead listen to us
out of the past
after all that they said
in their dream
of future generations

anyway what good would it do us
to be discovered
a hundred years hence
the same sky above the valleys
but the valleys unrecognizable
and finally a few trying to understand us
struggling to memorize
the old book of addresses

where we are talking

NOTE IN A GUIDE BOOK

So all this kindness that you were counting on
who did you think was going to pay for it
and come looking for you

how happily the little boy said I'm lost