

and two hands
beating a rhythm
on the shut pane
as the doors again
closed to, were all
you could catch
except where,
the metal frame
masking the rest of her,
the mouth flexed on
fulminating its song
into the tunnel.

Charles Tomlinson: With Respect to Flux / A. K. Weatherhead

The poetry of Charles Tomlinson is of interest not least for its comment on form, in a period when discussion about form and literature is lively enough. Whether there is form in reality, whether form in a scene is part of the act of perception, or whether it belongs not to reality but to the alien "order of discourse," in a word whether in the literary act form is discovered or imposed—these questions arise in Tomlinson's work; and though they receive, usually, ambivalent answers, they firmly secure our engagement. Also, if it is true that geometrical regularity in art by momentarily arresting the flux of being offers repose to the man disquieted by the obscurity and confusion of the world,¹ then again in the manipulation of geometric lines in his poems Tomlinson may be considered a spokesman for these entangled times.

He has amassed by now a substantial number of volumes of poetry, his own and translations. They contain no lines that spring or will spring to the mind to appease it in specific situations—the criterion Auden once proposed for testing; for of the clothes of the perfectly dressed man one remembers nothing. The poems are formed, one must imagine, with exquisite care; and they are exquisite. Tomlinson is admired by traditionalists, obviously; but he is accepted also by the radicals—those in whose presence one mustn't praise Philip Larkin.

He bridges in fact a number of divisions. He is from Staffordshire, the

country of Arnold Bennett's fiction, territory subjugated to pottery, sprouting the monstrous bottle kilns that are imaged on the cover of his volume, *A Peopled Landscape*,² and honored in his memory. Not consigning his memories conventionally into the bad scene of frustration, he returns to his old territories and can express horror at the remodeling of the old performed according to the values of suburbia, finding some beauty in the "comforting brick," and writing to "rescue" the area. He moved away from a working-class source, bringing with him a scarcely detectable midland accent, detected, however, and deplored by Percy Lubbock, to whom he had been hired to read. His achievement in both poetry and criticism gives the lie to the theory that holds the two incompatible—doing and teaching, in Bernard Shaw's unkind dichotomy. In his creative career so far, his poetry has not evolved into an open form; but he includes prose passages in his recent volumes of verse, and his painting like much contemporary poetry is open at least so far as to incorporate designs that chance may supply. Particularly in a period when American influence on all the English arts and on its culture in general has grown beyond any previous dimensions and the Atlantic has shrunk to a mere ditch in the global village, Tomlinson must be recognized as one of the first to have bridged the gap between English and American poetry.

He has done tours of duty in the States and returned home to an address in England which includes the line "Ozleworth Bottom." Here, in the fifties and sixties, it was possible to consider him as Our Man, pushing recent American exports in modern poetry and somewhat solitary in his efforts in days when, for example, no local publisher had brought out a collection of William Carlos Williams, whose sound effects William Empson had declared to be inaudible to the British ear. As a critic, amongst a good deal of work on European and British poets, Tomlinson has edited the Marianne Moore volume in the Twentieth Century Series in the States and the Penguin collection on Williams in England. In his own poetry the presence of Wallace Stevens is clear, as will appear. He can write occasionally like Robert Lowell, delivering out of his hat, for example, the sudden concrete curiosity among abstractions or among images only remotely associated, coming in on Lowell's old familiar enjambment:

Hard edges of the houses press
On the after-music senses, and refuse to burn,
Where an ice-cream van circulates the estate

Playing Greensleeves. . . .³

Or

“Duck!” you cried, George,
The day the militia filed out with rifles
At a Shriner celebration, but that was the pastoral era
Of sixty-six. . . .⁴

There are more Lowell echoes in *The Way In* of 1974. How may a poet get back to his youth, one might well wonder, without hearing *Life Studies* in his inward ear?

He has also caught the cadences of Miss Moore, her characteristically unbalanced compound sentence, for example, in “Ship’s Waiters,” a poem in Williams’s triadic line, dedicated to Marianne Moore:

Nothing
 can diminish
 that peculiar concert
of either the gliding
 man, or the infallible
 freaked quadruped, but one
can equal it. . . .⁵

Or he may use the integrated quotation as Miss Moore does:

Mayakovsky
has it!—
 “in the place
of style, an austere
 disposition of bolts.”⁶

Then, like so many of his American contemporaries, Tomlinson shows over and over again the importance of the example of Williams: the clean and clear observation like that of the red wheel barrow,

Between
slats of the garden
bench, and strung
to their undersides
ride clinging
rain-drops. . . .⁷

or the effort, slight as it is, to overcome the domination of chronological time:

they wait, sitting
(the moment)
on the earth floor
(is expansible)
saying very little. . . .⁸

He has gone so far with American poetry and with Williams; but of later developments in form, he has not partaken. He does not seek spatial form, and his efforts to counter chronological time are minimal; poems remain in their frames and are not noticeably concrete, immediate, or particular; they come to their endings; they do not repudiate syntax or avoid orders that are claimed to belong properly not to reality but only to discourse.

While his poetry does not depart radically from the tradition, however, his attitude to chance implies a species of openness: "The fact that 'chance' rhymes with 'dance,'" he says, "is a nutrifying thought for the artist, whether he is poet or painter."⁹ Poetry is like walking: ". . . one / may know / the way that / he is going . . . without / his knowing / what he / will see there."¹⁰ But chance operates rather in the paintings, where brushed and blotted symmetries produce trees, waves, and stones.

The pictures *Landscape with Bathers* and, to only a slightly smaller extent, *Willendorf Grotto*¹¹ show a reliance on nonimages, a kind of openness that parallels the reliance of many contemporary poets on passages of silence. Silence is used to make a statement that is uncontrolled by the limitation words necessarily exert; in his poems Tomlinson does not use it, but gets where he gets accepting limits and working for his effects within them. In the graphics, on the other hand, he relinquishes the controls that he maintains in the poems: he is willing to leave space unprogrammed and undesignated. In the *Willendorf Grotto* the title suggests Venus, and there are a number of uberal shapes to justify it. In the *Landscape* there are two figures who stand at the margin of an abyss of light. When he saw it—this, I believe, can be put this way—Tomlinson must have seen Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden, a motif which flickers here and there into tenuous reification throughout the poetry. Nothing of the garden or of anything else is specifically recognizable in the graphic, except that in one loop of light there is a tiny photo of a coach and pair, which serves to give the whole picture gigantic proportions. But its very lack of specific images renders it as if a more powerful evocation than, say, the controlled engravings of John Martin, who illustrated *Paradise Lost* with meticulous detail; in Tomlinson's Eden the mind is released into its own creative activity.

Eden haunts Tomlinson through all his volumes of verse. In one poem,¹² a "gift / Of forms" is given as one property of it. But it comes also in other

manifestations. The opening poem, "The Atlantic," of Tomlinson's first major work, *Seeing is Believing*,¹³ is characteristic of many: it describes light in a breaking wave; as so often, the poet seeks to contain moving light for a moment in a frozen scene. "The Atlantic" concludes, through a simile, by projecting the act of the wave as an act of the mind in which the latter has undergone replenishment after an evanescent experience of purity. Tomlinson, as will appear, knows that that which is static is false; but much of his *oeuvre* is an effort to trap the flux and hold it in a moment of vision; and if Eden is a gift of forms, one embodiment of it for him is light caught by water and movement arrested. Or it is a species of purity, a nakedness. After "all ways of knowledge past," he says in "Glass Grain,"

Eden comes round again, the motive dips
Back to its shapely self, its naked nature
Clothed by comparison alone—related. . . .¹⁴

In "Frondes Agrestes: On Re-Reading Ruskin," it is

the single grass-blade, or
Gathered up into its own translucence
Where there is no shade save colour, the unsymbolic rose—

this *pace* Ruskin, cited in the same poem as follows:

Light, being in its untempered state,
A rarity, we are (says the sage) meant
To enjoy "most probably" the effects of mist.¹⁵

If the graphics leave much to chance and the seminal opportunity of unstructured space, the poetry on the other hand exhibits all the caution and control that art critics have found to be characteristic of contemporary British art work, which is composed where, as at least the Americans feel, it ought to be uncomposed.¹⁶ Tomlinson, however, is very much aware of the field of discussion and the contemporary crises that have given rise in poetry to the characteristics mentioned above that he tends to avoid. In particular, he registers his ambivalence as to whether the form in the poem is a feature of the real world or only of its representation. Often in the poem form is in a reflection of the real, a reflection sometimes deliquescent. Images in water are ubiquitous in his verse. Reality is changed in the watery reflection; and it is ordered. For one example:

. . . . a geometry of water . . .
Squares off the clouds' redundances
And sets them floating in a nether atmosphere
All angles
. . . . It is a geometry and not
A fantasia of distorting forms¹⁷

The form here and regularly throughout the poems is one discovered in an act of perception which is not mere innocent seeing.

The geometry Tomlinson frequently finds in scenes in the poems may remind us of the geometry in the early Williams by means of which he tried to bring painterly qualities into his poems to avoid the literary luxuries of imagism inherent in a scene: "Rather notice, mon cher," he says in "To a Solitary Disciple,"

that the moon is
tilted above
the point of the steeple
than that its color
is shell-pink.

So Tomlinson, imagining Courbet might have painted a chrysanthemum, says.

. . . . he would have missed the space
triangled between stalk and curtain
along a window-frame base.¹⁸

Repeatedly geometry is discovered: "This child," a recent poem begins,

knows nothing of the pattern
his bent back lifts
above his own reflection:
it climbs the street-lamp's stem
and cross-bar, branching
to take in all the lines
from gutter, gable, slates
and chimney-crowns to the high
pillar of a mill chimney¹⁹

It is perhaps such patient ordering and the resultant version of classicism that Denise Levertov regrets when she bids Tomlinson, ". . . stop sipping

your afternoon tea, *belch* if you need to!"²⁰ He lacks the talent for this or other kinds of exhibitionism, and he is not Whitman. And furthermore, if the discovery of the pattern reduces tangled reality to a scheme or a pictograph, it does at least have the effect of creating the reader's awareness.

Form need not be geometrical. "Foxes' Moon" provides an example of the formalizing of a remote sensation about the night:

These
Are the fox hours, cleansed
Of all the meanings we can use
And so refuse them.

The concept of the human irrelevance of the hours of the night can be given a local habitation by integrating it with the life and times of the natural history of the fox: the night hours can be spoken of in terms of foxiness. Geometrical stabilizers are present also in the poem: "moonlight on the frigid lattices / Of pylons" and "shapes of dusk / Take on an edge." And we may note also another formal quality and a regular characteristic of the later verse especially, a lovely reticulation of rhyme that spreads through the poem—rhyme, in Tomlinson's own words from elsewhere, "hiding itself among the syllables, in the bells and knots of language," exemplified in the following:

. . . . foxes bring
Flint hearts and sharpened senses to
This desolation of grisaille in which the dew
Grows clearer, colder. Foxes go
In their ravenous quiet to where
The last farm meets the first
Row from the approaching town²¹

But the main process here is a formalizing where objects are correlative not of emotion but of a sensation or an idea that calls for articulation. "In Connecticut" shows a similar strategy by the repetition of the word white: villages, churches, snow, sky, birch twigs, and rows of pillars all are white. And these organize the idea of candor and conviction with which a woman offers praise for the minister which is

delivered
with the same shadowless conviction
as her invitation, when
lowering, leaning

out of the window she was cleaning
she had said: "Our doors
are always open."²²

Form is conceived of too as an ending. The last poem of *Written on Water* posits the satisfying form of the drama in which narratives and lives have endings, against the formless real lives of actors and audience: in "Curtain Call," "the dead" are called back from their dressing rooms after the end of the play and are reluctantly resurrected and forced to rejoin their "unplotted lives."²³

Finding the skull of a sea-bird on the beach Tomlinson writes as follows: "The cleanliness, the natural geometry of the skull suggest the idea of surrounding it in a geometry of your own—carefully ruled lines that set off the skull, that extend it, that bed it in a universe of contrasting lines of force . . . skull and lines build up and outwards into a containing universe."²⁴ This represents a part of this poet's strategy: to supply the context of a design upon the world, to create a *containing* universe. It is, of course, to some extent an instantaneous and involuntary act: for it is not the eye alone that sees the world but the mind, employing memory and creating structure from the anarchy of sensation. "The senses," Tomlinson writes in one of his prose passages, "reminded by other seeings, bring to bear on the act of vision their pattern of images; they give point and place to an otherwise naked and homeless impression. It is the mind sees."²⁵ In "A Garland for Thomas Eakins," the poet asks rhetorically,

What does the man
who sees
trust to
if not the eye? He trusts
to knowledge
to right appearances.

The accent is Marianne Moore's; later in the same poem, in the accents of Wallace Stevens, the poet remarks,

A fat woman
by Reubens
is not a fat
woman but a fiction.²⁶

In other poems that bring up the structuring power of the mind, Tomlinson frequently comes close to Wallace Stevens. Turning his flashlight upon a stand of nettles he recognizes the presence of an ordering power:

What large thing was it stood
In such small occurrence, that it could
Transfigure the night, as we
Drew back

And again as the poem closes with reference to the night:

The dead had distanced,
Patterned its lineaments, and to them
The living night was cenotaph and
ceaseless requiem.²⁷

The echoes are audible, from “The Idea of Order at Key West,” “Peter Quince at the Clavier,” or other places where Stevens endlessly questions reality and the transfiguring power of the mind. Tomlinson has a lover’s quarrel with Stevens, asking, in the Preface to the second edition of *The Necklace*, “was there ever a poetry which stood so explicitly by a physical universe and against transcendence, but which gives so little account of that universe, its spaces, patterns, textures”²⁸ As concerned as Stevens to identify what the world is really like, he comes to the problem not via Stevens but via the long debate on the nature of the visual impression—the question of the “innocence” of the eye, to use the metaphor of Ruskin, with whom he disagrees.

For Tomlinson, as a painter, the landscape or the static scene is the natural object for the poem. He cherishes a marriage between scene and action, especially in images where eye and hand are identified in action—in “Maillol,” for instance, who turned to “an art / where hand and eye / must marry”²⁹—became in fact a sculptor. He introduces action into poems; but I think his attitude to it is rather like E. M. Forster’s toward the necessity of plot in the novel: “Oh dear me, yes, I suppose so!” He doesn’t seem happy reporting the awkward jagged edges of detailed action. In “Mackinnon’s Boat,”

Macaskill throws
To Mackinnon a cigarette down the length
of half the craft. Cupping,
They light up.

It’s okay; but he’s happier a few lines earlier to report that “an ease makes one / The disparate links of the concerted action.”³⁰ He is happier still when action is completely frozen into a tableau, as the momentarily frozen wave in “The Atlantic,” the “Pompeian pause” that “arrests / Merton be-

side his window" in "The End,"³¹ or, in the opening of the title poem of *The Way of a World*, where he says he had forgotten but now, safe in the pluperfect tense, remembers

The image of a gull the autumn gust
Had pulled upwards and past³²

On the matter of form and order, Tomlinson's position is not simple: he apparently believes there is an order in things; and he can speak, as we have seen, of "spaces, patterns, textures," and can go on to cite Hopkins's "world of canon and fugue."³³ At the same time he can speak of the rhythm of writing as a "feeling out of the design" "an inventing of the material, where material and design neither pre-exist 'just to be written down' nor exist in separation."³⁴ Whether parallels for his work should be sought in analytical cubism or synthetic, Cézanne or Juan Gris, is uncertain. He desires order to be found and held against the flux; but at the same time he is aware of the fortuitousness of the order: in a poem so titled, "The chances of rhyme," he says,

are like the chances of meeting—
In the finding fortuitous, but once found,
binding³⁵

He is not unmindful in the poems of an intractability and an overwhelming disorder of the world beyond art, although in the poem just cited we are asked "why should we speak / Of art, of life, as if the one were all form / And the other all Sturm-und-Drang?" He fosters the kind of ambivalence that Williams maintained, for whom "without invention / nothing lies under the witch-hazel / bush" but for whom also,

The rose is green and will bloom
overtopping you, green, livid
green when you shall no more speak, or
taste, or even be.

Tomlinson doesn't want to constrain the world into a rigid form or annihilate reality into a heroic couplet, as Pope. He recognizes the autonomy of the objective world even if he is too human to give it everything. In one poem, using Pope as an example, he makes the point that Pope's sheer intelligibility bars the human approach, while an Aztec sacrifice, because it is a mystery and without boundary "touches us more nearly."³⁶

In the discussion about the painting of the skull he goes on further and

speaks of the “little universe my lines netted together around it,” manifestly aware of the limitations involved in the geometrical strategy. He is questioning how he can relate that little system to the darkness inside the skull. Skulls engage him, bringing as they do the mystery of the intractable: in the prose piece called “Skullshapes,” he writes

Skulls are a keen instance of this duality
of the visible: it borders what the eye
cannot make out, it transcends itself with
the suggestion of all that is there beside
what lies within the eyes’ possession: it
cannot be possessed.³⁷

In a similar vein, but ironically, he complains to the shell, in a poem so titled, that it offends because it is “there / Like the mountain / Which the too-civil fancy / Cannot appropriate to itself.”³⁸

The inability of art to achieve faithful organization of the real finds its way in one various hint or another into many poems. There is the early poem, “Sea-Change,” a Stevensish exercise where metaphors for the sea successively replace one another, such as “The sea is uneasy marble.” “The sea is green silk.” The poem ends,

Illustration is white wine
Floating in a saucer of ground glass
On a pedestal of cut glass:

A static instance, therefore untrue.³⁹

The static, which, to be literal, is all that poetry or painting can provide, is dismissed. There is a beautiful statement of the failure of art forms in “The Fox Gallery”: the upper story of the poet’s house was so called because, window to window, one could follow the expected route of a fox, “parallel with the restraining line / of wall and pane . . .” But the geometry proved to be wrong: when the fox duly appeared, it came at a different angle from that expected—*toward* the house; and they watched it

sheer off deterred
by habitation, and saw
how utterly the two worlds were
disparate . . .⁴⁰

—the two worlds, superficially animal and human, are more generally the

real and the artificial; nature, we see, is not to be organized by our geometrical conceptions of it. Another poem, "The Chestnut Avenue," shows nature defying the conceptual limitations of the human arrangement:

At the wind's invasion
The greenness teeters till the indented parallels
Lunge to a restive halt, defying still
The patient geometry that planted them

We have lent them order, the poem proceeds; but "Mindless / They lead the mind its ways, deny / The imposition of its frontiers . . ." ⁴¹

The fox in "The Fox Gallery" is described as "that perfect ideogram for agility / and liquefaction"; and in a poet where nothing is left to *mere* chance, we may identify this creature with the flowing process of life which Tomlinson is bent upon recognizing in a poetry which yearns, all the same, for the static scene. He pays homage to process. In the prose piece "A Process," he writes of the pictograph as "an outline, which nature, as the poet said, [Henry Reed, one supposes] does not have." Rain, in the same piece, is a process; and its

perfect accompaniment would be that speech
of islanders, in which . . . the sentence is
never certainly brought to an end, its
aim less to record with completeness the
impression an event makes, than to mark
its successive aspects as they catch the
eye, the ear of the speaker. ⁴²

We are reminded perhaps of the preliminary sketches of Leonardo or of the poems of Charles Olson, in which the early stages of the poem, the rough drafts of phrases, say, that have been improved upon, remain along with the improvements. But if we compare Tomlinson with the American open form poets whose actual *form* is process, then his homage seems controlled.

There is one feature he does share with them, however, which is perhaps more significant than the mere curiosity it appears: the affection for stone in the imagery. It is a paradox that poets who have jettisoned fixed forms and adopted fluid ones manifest this predilection for images of the most hard and permanent element. Or perhaps not a paradox, but rather a compensation—of the same order as the recourse to *Emaux et Camées* as a model on the part of Eliot and Pound, recoiling from the excesses of free verse and "Amygism." In poets where form is process, in Williams, for one, in the *Passages* poems of Robert Duncan, in Denise Levertov, and in Olson

himself, stone and its engravings are hard and permanent. In Tomlinson the image of stone is only less ubiquitous than that of water. It is firm and fixed: the stone piers of the Brooklyn Bridge,⁴³ for example, or the hardness of a face in stone.⁴⁴ But on occasion stone, like scene and like geometry, must allow for process: "The Picture of J. T. in a Prospect of Stone" wishes the child the constancy of stone:

—But stone
is hard.
—Say, rather
it resists
the slow corrosives
and the flight
of time
and yet it takes
the play, the fluency
from light.⁴⁵

Water is the more favorite image, appearing especially frequently in the volume *Written on Water*. It offers by reflection a picture of the world and sometimes of oneself. But as often as the poems present still, reflecting water they present also running water. Water flows, for example, in a poem titled "Logic"; and the ripple of a blade of grass on the surface destroys the image of the sky. The surface is also confused by rocks it flows over, "humped by the surfaces / It races over, though a depth can still / And a blade's touch render it illegible" (the last word part of an image cluster in Tomlinson who, as in the title *Written on Water*, for one example, often links water with reading or calligraphy). We may expect the running water to be the figure for life itself, anarchic, haphazard, influenced, getting there in the end. But no. It proves instead to be a simile for logic—"for it flows / Meeting resistance arguing as it goes,"⁴⁶ the wayward stream standing for the epitome of rational order. Still and running water come together again in the title poem of *Written on Water*, which is Part VI of a sequence titled "Movements." The "life lines of erratic water" are "hard to read"; there is also the "still pool"

That we were led, night by night,
To return to, as though to clarify ourselves
Against its depth, its silence . . .⁴⁷

This is the penultimate poem in a late volume. It ends with a superb fusion

between flux and constancy, the moving water and the images of stone which summarize these elements and their relationship for the volume:

“Written on water,” one might say
Of each day’s flux and lapse,
But to speak of water is to entertain the image
Of its seamless momentum once again,
To hear in its wash and grip on stone
A music of constancy behind
The wide promiscuity of acquaintanceship,
Links of water chiming on one another,
Water-ways permeating the rock of time.⁴⁸

NOTES

- 1 Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, trans. Michael Bullock (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 15-16, 44.
- 2 Charles Tomlinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).
- 3 “Prometheus,” *The Way of a World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 5.
- 4 “Elegy for Henry Street,” *Written on Water* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 49.
- 5 *A Peopled Landscape*, pp. 46-47.
- 6 “Over Brooklyn Bridge,” *Ibid.*, p. 48.
- 7 “During Rain,” *Written on Water*, p. 48.
- 8 “Before the Dance,” *The Way of a World*, p. 28.
- 9 “The Poet as a Painter,” *Christian Science Monitor*, March 7, 1974.
- 10 “To Louis Zukofsky,” *Kulchur*, IV No. 14 (Summer, 1964), 14.
- 11 Both graphics are reproduced in Tomlinson’s *Words and Images*, Covent Garden Press, 1972.
- 12 “Eden,” *The Way of a World*, p. 7.
- 13 (London: Oxford University Press, 1960). First published in 1958.
- 14 *Seeing is Believing*, p. 16.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 16 Lucy R. Lippard, “Introduction,” *Pop Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), p. 18. Edward Lucie-Smith, “Introduction,” *British Painting and Sculpture 1960-1970* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1970), p. 44.
- 17 “Swimming Chenango Lake,” *The Way of a World*, p. 3.
- 18 “Composition,” *The Way of a World*, p. 43.
- 19 “The Tree,” *The Way In* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 9.
- 20 “An English Event,” *Kulchur*, II No. 6 (Summer, 1962), p. 3.
- 21 *The Way In*, pp. 17-18.
- 22 *American Scenes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 38.

- 23 P. 54.
 24 "The Poet as a Painter," *op. cit.*
 25 "Skullshapes," *The Way of a World*, p. 52.
 26 *American Scenes*, p. 43.
 27 "Night Transfigured," *The Way of a World*, p. 9.
 28 *The Necklace* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). First published, Oxford: Fantasy Press, 1955.
 29 *A Peopled Landscape*, p. 35.
 30 *Written on Water*, p. 5.
 31 *The Way of a World*, p. 60.
 32 P. 14.
 33 In the preface to *The Necklace*.
 34 In *Agenda*, X no. 4 to XI no. 1.
 35 *The Way of a World*, p. 59.
 36 "Le Musée Imaginaire," *A Peopled Landscape*, p. 31.
 37 *The Way of a World*, p. 52.
 38 "The Shell," *Seeing is Believing*, p. 37.
 39 *The Necklace*, p. 7.
 40 *The Way of a World*, p. 42.
 41 *A Peopled Landscape*, p. 19.
 42 *The Way of a World*, p. 55.
 43 "Over Brooklyn Bridge," *A Peopled Landscape*, p. 49.
 44 "Portait in Stone," *Ibid.*, p. 39.
 45 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
 46 *The Way of a World*, p. 13.
 47 P. 53.
 48 P. 54.

TWO POEMS / ROBERT BLY

The Perspiculum Worm

And the shoats wildly stabbed in the barley,
 the tears that fall down my face,
 the reeds bending inside the river's veins,
 water that drops to the knees,
 the rooster boxed in his cage of pain,
 what comes forth without saying goodbye,
 the perspiculum worm curling and uncurling woven into his
 reedy universe of time,
 snow that pours down out of the mountain,
 the stiff anther that rises to meet the sun,
 the peony—rose and pink—opens in the mist,
 and only the hermit wandering alone sees it.