

## Prologue / Epilogue

We think we are at Colonus  
When we are at Thebes.  
The mother is a child, the father is a child.  
And everyone is weeping from blind eyes.

Who are those trailing figures.  
A man leaning on a girl  
Or a woman leading her son.

If only he had known, if only she had known.  
What was done never would be done.

Do you see Antigone –  
Wasn't she being questioned lately,  
Too sure of her virtue to summon a defense.

A week ago a father shot himself  
After his daughter  
Killed herself with his gun.  
The mother kept rocking in her chair.

Someone opened a door and found them there.  
Witness to a fall as great as Troy.

Another horse rolled in yesterday.  
Did you hear it squeaking, can you smell  
The sweat of those who wait inside.

(From the collection of poems, *Afterimage*, 1995 forthcoming)

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## Out of Chaos

No wonder some prefer a narrow hall,  
A single room where doubts die  
Until possibility, that odd flower,  
Returns its face.

The doors close and open every day  
And every day we hurtle toward the city.

Today I saw the usual human disaster:  
Head in her chest, legs pocked with pink wounds,  
Fingers wrapped tight around a white handbag.

Then the subway doors opened and children  
Piled in: the whole car filled with their high  
Broken music.

At the next stop they all poured out;  
The car was vacant, solemn, the air  
Settled and clear – but she was still there.

Outside a lilac bush blows to the wind,

And everywhere one looks  
A pre-Socratic flux  
Streams down avenues  
Of taxicabs and radios,  
Mortality's parade crowned with neon and chrome –

As if we were beats evolving toward a sentence  
That breaks and disperses before we arrive  
At the city we promised to build.

(From the collection of poems, *Afterimage*, 1995 forthcoming)

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## A Song

Deep in summer I saw an owl  
With maggots swarming through its flesh;  
In autumn through bright hills of leaves  
I found a bird with body torn;  
I fed the deer and let the bread  
Fall to the ground into the dust  
As winter hardened the earth's crust;  
I found their antlers in the grass  
Beside the smallest flower of spring.

In joy and terror I woke each day  
To meet this strange familiar friend,  
Silent, playful, shrieking, holy;  
In joy and terror I woke each day  
To study its face with eyes and hands,  
And it was soon my private study;  
With joy and terror we fill each day,  
In joy and terror the mouth shall sing:  
The earth in love and death is our ring.

(From the collection of poems, *Temples and Fields*, 1988)

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