

The Dream of Now

Six reflective songs

I

Let Evening Come

Let the light of late afternoon
shine through chinks in the barn,
moving
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing
as a woman takes up her needles
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned
in long grass. Let the stars appear
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.
Let the wind die down. Let the shed
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop
in the oats, to air in the lung
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't
be afraid. God does not leave us
comfortless, so let evening come.

Jane Kenyon

II

The Dream of Now

When you wake to the dream of now
from night and its other dream,
you carry day out of the dark
like a flame.

When spring comes north and flowers
unfold from earth and its even sleep,
you lift summer on with your breath
lest it be lost ever so deep.

Your life you live by the light you find
and follow it on as well as you can,
carrying through darkness wherever you
go
your one little fire that will start again.

William Stafford

III

Reflections on Water Dreams

In the slight ripple,
The mind perceives the heart.
In the slight ripple,
Fishes dart
Like fingers
Centrifugal
Like wishes wanton.

And the pleasures rise
as the eyes fall
through lucid water.
The small pebble,
The clear clay bottom,
The white shell apparent.

Who would ask for more
Of the August afternoon?
Who would dig mines
And follow shadows?

Delmore Schwartz

IV

The Layers

I have walked through many lives,
some of them my own,
and I am not who I was,
though some principle of being
abides, from which I struggle not to
stray.

When I look behind,
as I am compelled to look
before I can gather strength
to proceed on my journey,
I see the milestones dwindling
toward the horizon
and the slow fires trailing
from the abandoned camp-sites,
...scavenger angels
....

Oh, I have made myself a tribe
out of my true affections,
and my tribe is scattered!
How shall the heart be reconciled
to its feast of losses?

V

When Lost in the Forest

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes
beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called
Here,
And you must treat it as a powerful
stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be
known.
The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
I have made this place around you.
If you leave it, you may come back
again, saying Here.
No two trees are the same to Raven.
No two branches are the same to Wren.
If what a tree or a bush does is lost on
you,
You are surely lost. Stand still. The
forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you.

David Wagoner

VI

From the Almanac of Last Things

From the almanac of last things
I choose the spider lily
For the grace of its brief
Blossom....

But I choose *The Song of Songs*
Because the flesh
Of ...pomegranates
Has survived
All the frost of dogma.

I choose January with its chill
Lessons of patience and despair –
August, too sun-struck for lessons.
I choose a thimbleful of red wine
To make my heart race,

...another to help me
sleep. From the almanac
of last things I choose you....
And I choose evening

Because the light clinging
To the window
Reflects the most
Just as it is ready
To go out.

Linda Pastan