

## PHILAI TE KOU PHILAI

There is a portrait by Eakins  
Of the Intellectual, a man  
Who might be a school teacher  
Shown with the utmost seriousness, a masculine drama  
In the hardness of his black shoes, in the glitter  
Of his eyeglasses and his firm stance—  
How have we altered! As Charles said  
Rowing on the lake  
In the woods, ‘if this were the country,  
The nation, if these were the routes through it—’

How firm the man is  
In that picture  
Tho pedagogic.  
This was his world. Grass  
Grows to the water’s edge  
In these woods, the brown earth  
Shows through the thinned grass  
At the little landing places of vacation

Like deserted stations,  
Small embarkation points: We are  
Lost in the childish  
Here, and we address  
Only each other  
In the flat bottomed lake boat  
Of boards. It is a lake  
In a bend of the parkway, the breeze  
Moves among the primitive toys  
Of vacation, the circle of the visible

The animal looked across  
And saw my eyes . . . Vacation’s interlude?  
When the animal ran? What entered the mind  
When dawn lit the iron locomotives,  
The iron bridges at the edge of the city,

Underpinnings, bare structure,  
The animal’s bare eyes

In the woods . . .  
‘The relation of the sun and the earth

Is not nothing! The sea in the morning'  
And the hills brightened, Loved

And not loved, unbearable impact  
Of conviction and the beds of the defeated,

Children waking in the beds of the defeated  
As the day breaks on the million

Windows and the grimed sills  
Of a ruined ethic

Bursting with ourselves, and the myths  
Have been murderous,

Most murderous, stake  
And faggot. Where can it end? Loved, Loved

And Hated,  
Rococo boulevards

Backed by the Roman  
Whose fluted pillars

Blossoming antique acanthus

Stand on other coasts  
Lifting their tremendous cornices.

## NIECE

The streets of San Francisco,  
She said of herself, were my

Father and mother, speaking to the quiet guests  
In the living room looking down the hills

To the bay. And we imagined her  
Walking in the wooden past  
Of the western city . . . her mother

Was not that city  
But my elder sister. I remembered

The watchman at the beach  
Telling us the war had ended—

That was the first world war  
Half a century ago—my sister  
Had a ribbon in her hair.

## STREET

Ah these are the poor,  
These are the poor—

Bergen street.

Humiliation  
Hardship . . .

Nor are they very good to each other;  
It is not that. I want

An end of poverty  
As much as anyone

For the sake of intelligence,  
'The conquest of existence'—

It has been said, and is true—

And this is real pain,  
Moreover. It is terrible to see the children,

The righteous little girls;  
So good, they expect to be so good . . .

## THE FORMS OF LOVE

Parked in the fields  
All night  
So many years ago,  
We saw  
A lake beside us  
When the moon rose.  
I remember

Leaving that ancient car  
Together. I remember  
Standing in the white grass  
Beside it. We groped  
Our way together  
Downhill in the bright  
Incredible light

Beginning to wonder  
Whether it could be lake  
Or fog  
We saw, our heads  
Ringing under the stars we walked  
To where it would have wet our feet  
Had it been water

## PSALM

*Veritas sequitur . . .*

In the small beauty of the forest  
The wild deer bedding down—  
That they are there!

                    Their eyes  
Effortless, the soft lips  
Nuzzle and the alien small teeth  
Tear at the grass

                    The roots of it  
Dangle from their mouths  
Scattering earth in the strange woods.  
They who are there.

                    Their paths  
Nibbled thru the fields, the leaves that shade them  
Hang in the distances  
Of sun

                    The small nouns  
Crying faith  
In this in which the wild deer  
Startle, and stare out.

## BOY'S ROOM

A friend saw the rooms  
Of Keats and Shelley  
At the lake, and saw 'they were just  
Boys' rooms' and was moved

By that. And indeed a poet's room  
Is a boy's room  
And I suppose that women know it.

Perhaps the unbeautiful banker  
Is exciting to a woman, a man  
Not a boy gasping  
For breath over a girl's body.