SUNFLOWER SEEDS

Klein's Hero and Demagogue

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In "POLITICAL MEETING" A. M. Klein describes an orator addressing an anti-conscription rally in Quebec. The Orator, we are told, is "a country uncle with sunflower seeds in his pockets." The description of the sunflower seeds in the Orator's pockets is the most vivid physical detail in the poem. But it is more than just that. For anyone who knows "Political Meeting," the image of the sunflower seeds has the power to call up the complex mood of the poem, and, in particular, its ambivalent attitude to the Orator. Significantly, the image occurs exactly midway through the poem (in the twentieth of its thirty-nine lines), for in retrospect it seems to be a kind of centre out of which the whole poem emanates.

What, precisely, *is* the attitude to the Orator in the poem? The poem is subtitled "*For Camillien Houde*," but even without this subtitle it would be easy to recognize the Orator as a portrait of Houde, the popular mayor of Montreal who not only had the same appearance and manner as the Orator, but also, like him, spoke out strongly against conscription. Klein, as a Jew, had little sympathy with those who interfered with the war against Hitler, and when Houde was interned without trial by the Mackenzie King government, Klein certainly did not object. At the time, Klein was editor of the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*, and he gleefully, almost gloatingly, reprinted an editorial from the Montreal *Gazette* condemning Houde as a traitor.[1] But "Political Meeting" was first published six years later, and though Klein still clearly disapproves of Houde's position as represented by the Orator, his attitude seems less simple than before, perhaps because he is no longer writing under the immediate pressure of war. He is not satisfied simply to condemn the Orator as an evil man; he is interested in exploring the strength of his appeal, and, through exploring it, he discovers that he himself is not immune to it, whatever he may think of the Orator's ultimate aims. The subtitle of the poem is, perhaps, revealing in this regard: though Klein is against the Orator, he is, in a sense, for him as well, "*for* Camillien Houde." This is what makes the Orator so dangerous, that there is something genuine and valuable in him and in his relation to his followers.

Klein's ambivalent attitude to the Orator, deep distrust mixed with fascination, even with a kind of admiration, comes through especially in the detail of the sunflower seeds. What are these sunflower seeds? Are they a cynical ploy on the part of the Orator to manipulate his audience's sympathies by parading his humble "country" background? Clearly they are that. But they are also a sign that, whatever his ultimate intentions, he really is rooted in the same world as the people he is addressing and that he is genuinely moved by the same concerns as they are.

This interpretation of the role of the sunflower seeds in "Political Meeting" is supported by a passage in *The Second Scroll.* The narrator of the novel tells how, when he was a child in Montreal, refugees arrived from his parents' village in the old country and described a pogrom which had wiped out many of his parents' friends, neighbours, and relatives. The narrator says of the visitors: "Their faces were lined and always held serious expressions except when they patted my head and I discovered that they had sunflower seeds in their pockets. They spoke with a great and bitter intensity." In a footnote, the narrator says "Somehow my entire childhood is evoked through this incident." I think it is legitimate to see Klein himself speaking here, especially since the note goes on to refer us to another version of the incident in a poem entitled "Autobiographical" which Klein had written several years before *The Second Scroll.* In describing the Orator, then, Klein has used a detail, "sunflower seeds in his pockets," which evokes for him the world of his childhood with its intense sense of community, of "home and the familiar" as he says in "Autobiographical." That is, he is associating the Orator with what is most valuable to him in his own life. He rejects the Orator's politics; he rejects the dark passions he arouses in the crowd; but he feels a deep sympathy for a man who, after all, is trying to defend his community with the same "great and bitter intensity" of the refugees from the pogrom.[2]

Klein's choice of the image of sunflower seeds, then, can be seen in two different contexts. We can see Klein as cleverly choosing a telling detail, in the fashion of a novelist of manners, which throws light on a particular social situation, or we can see him as making use of an intense personal association which is more significant to him than to his readers, most of whom have no way of knowing about it. Whichever context we choose, we seem to arrive at the same sense, a disturbing sense of ambivalence towards the Orator and what he represents.

There is a third approach to the sunflower seeds which also supports this sense, but which, in the end, tells us much more than the other two. This approach concentrates neither on the external world with which Klein's art deals — the world of Klein's society — nor on the internal world from which his art ultimately springs — the world of Klein's psyche; instead it concentrates on the art itself. Klein's lifework is a single complex whole unified by a central concern, and when we are able to see the image of the sunflower seeds as part of this whole, it takes on a resonance that could otherwise hardly be guessed at. Though it may be useful to

know about Klein's society and his spiritual biography, what we must really know about is his art and the vision it embodies.

A. M. Klein's work as a whole can be seen as one extended exploration of a central vision, a vision of the One in the many.[3] That is, although the nature of things is infinitely varied, this variety is the expression of an underlying unity. The underlying unity does not have an independent existence of its own; it is not, in some sense, "out there." It exists only in the variety through which it is expressed: the One exists *in* the many, not *apart* from it.

Throughout his career as an artist, Klein is concerned with recreating this vision of the One in the many in the very forms of his poems. Perhaps the most obvious way in which he creates formal equivalents of the One in the many is by grouping poems together under single titles. Nearly half the poetry in the *Collected Poems* consists of such groups. In this way we are presented with an experience of the many which points to an underlying unity. The most important of these more than twenty collections, and the one in which form most obviously mirrors content, is "Out of the Pulver and the Polished Lens," which is a celebration of Spinoza, the greatest philosopher of the One in the many. *The Second Scroll* can also be seen as a kind of collection demonstrating in its form the One in the many.[4] It consists of five chapters linked by their titles to the five books of the Pentateuch, the first scroll. Each book has a separate appendix, or gloss, and the last gloss is, in itself, a collection of poems.

WHEN WE TURN TO INDIVIDUAL poems, we continue to see the principle of the One in the many at work. In "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape," Klein speaks of the Poet naming the universe "item by exciting item." This is an excellent description of Klein's method in many of his finest poems, as well as in *The Second Scroll*, especially the "Catalogue of Incognitos." That is, Klein often makes use of the oldest poetic form of all, the catalogue or list of items. Though this technique may appear primitive, Klein's use of it is invariably sophisticated: listing the many is always some way of commenting on the One. A striking example of this technique is the opening of "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape," describing the indifference of the world to the apparent death of the Poet:

> Not an editorial-writer, bereaved with bartlett,
> mourns him, the shelved Lycidas.
> No actress squeezes a glycerine tear for him.
> The radio broadcast lets his passing pass.
> And with the police, no record.

This apparently random, unconnected list of different ways of ignoring the Poet

in itself demonstrates the fragmentation of a world which rejects the unifying power of poetry.

Another aspect of Klein's art which is even more striking evidence of his concern with the One in the many is his use of metaphor. Klein's use of metaphor is at its highest, most developed form in the poems of *The Rocking Chair.* Again and again he begins with one particular thing — a rocking chair, a refrigerator, a grain elevator — and spins out of it a seemingly endless string of metaphors which appear to lead off in totally different directions but which all take us back to the actual thing itself, whose essential nature provides them with their underlying unity. One example is "Lone Bather," which begins

> Upon the ecstatic diving board the diver,
> poised for parabolas, lets go
> lets go his manshape to become a bird.
> Is bird, and topsy-turvy
> the pool floats overhead, and the white tiles snow
> their crazy hexagons. Is dolphin. Then
> is plant with lilies bursting from his heels.

But of all the aspects of Klein's art which point to his central concern, perhaps the most interesting, the one which seems to work on the deepest level, is his imagery. There are certain images which recur again and again in Klein's work and take on a greater intensity as his art matures. These images tend to cluster together in the works which are his major achievements and his major statements on the purpose of his art, works such as "Out of the Pulver and the Polished Lens," "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape," and *The Second Scroll.* Two of the most important of these images are dismemberment and flowers.

Klein often uses imagery of dismemberment to represent the world of the many in which the unifying vision of the One has been lost sight of. The most powerful dismemberment passage in Klein's work occurs in Melech's description of the Sistine Chapel in "Gloss Gimel," the third gloss of *The Second Scroll.* Michelangelo's portrayal of the divinity of the whole human form reminds Melech of

> another scattering of limbs, other conglomerations of bodies the disjected members of which I had but recently beheld... I saw again the *relictae* of the camps ... the human form divine ... reduced and broken down to its named bones, femur and tibia and clavicle and ulna and thorax and pelvis and cranium....[5]

In "Meditations Upon Survival," Klein describes his dismembered people as "longing / for its members' re-membering!" The pun on remembering is important, for Klein often presents the process of unification, of "re-membering," as a kind of "remembering," of locating oneself in a tradition which has been temporarily disrupted. When Spinoza "remember[s] the thought of the Adored," and when Klein's poet "remember[s] his travels over [the] body" of language, they are both re-membering something which their misguided contemporaries have

dismembered. Klein's most moving description of the process of remembering occurs in *The Second Scroll*, when the narrator witnesses the coming to life of the ancient Hebrew language in the new land of Israel, and sees it as the restoring of a oneness which the Jewish people had yearned for over the centuries.

> It was as if I was spectator to the healing of torn flesh, or heard a broken bone come together, set, and grow again.
>
> Wonderful is the engrafting of skin, but more wonderful the million busy hushed cells, in secret planning, stitching, stretching, until — the wound is vanished, the blood courses normal, the cicatrice falls off.

If imagery of dismemberment suggests a world of the many where the One has been lost sight of, imagery of flowers, especially in bunches, occurs whenever Klein perceives the vision of the One in the many with the greatest intensity. At the end of "Out of the Pulver and the Polished Lens," we are told to

> Think of Spinoza . . . plucking tulips
> Within the garden of Mynheer, forgetting
> Dutchmen and Rabbins, and consumptive fretting,
> Plucking his tulips in the Holland sun,
> Remembering the thought of the Adored,
> Spinoza, gathering flowers for the One,
> The ever-unwedded lover of the Lord.

Spinoza's vision of the One in the many is symbolized by his picking tulips in the sun, which is their ultimate source, and gathering them up as a gift for the One.[6] "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape" ends with a similar vision of the poet alone in the garden of the One — the Garden of Eden — planting seeds. In "Grain Elevator," Klein transforms the huge cement box of the grain elevator into a flower box symbolizing the unity of mankind:

> always this great box flowers over us
> with all the coloured faces of mankind. . . .

In *The Second Scroll*, the narrator is sent to Israel to compile an "anthology" of Hebrew poetry which will give evidence of the oneness which Israel embodies. Klein, who describes the anthology as "flower-picking," is clearly aware that "anthology" is derived from a Greek word meaning "flower gathering" (compare Spinoza "gathering flowers for the One"). The most exciting poetry which the narrator discovers is the poetry of everyday speech, the poetry of a language and a nation reborn. We have already seen how he describes this discovery in terms of a dismembered body re-membering itself. He also describes it, in the same passage, in terms of flowers:

> Nameless authorship flourished in the streets. It was growth, its very principle, shown in prolific action! Twigs and branches that had been dry and sapless for generations, for millennia, now budded, blossomed — and with new flowers!
>
> I had at last discovered it, the great efflorescent impersonality.

IT SHOULD BE CLEAR BY NOW that Klein is deeply concerned with, even obsessed by, his vision of the One in the many. What may not yet be clear is why. My discussion so far may have suggested that Klein's concern is primarily philosophical or aesthetic. This, I believe, is not true. For Klein, the deepest significance of the vision of the One in the many is that it allows him to define the most important moral question of his age, and perhaps of any age, the relation of the individual to the community of which he is a part. To Klein, whose period of artistic maturity coincided with the age of the dictators and its immediate aftermath, this question presents itself in one form in particular. What is the difference between a hero and a demagogue?

Spinoza, who is the greatest spokesman for the philosophy of the One in the many, is also one of Klein's ideal heroes, for, as "Out of the Pulver and the Polished Lens" argues, the two go hand in hand. Spinoza's philosophy involves the rejection of the dogma of a transcendent God in favour of a vision of God as immanent. That is, the rabbinical élite of Judaism, as well as the priestly élite of Christianity, argue that God exists apart from His creation, which He controls but with which He has nothing in common. The rabbis and priests locate God "within his vacuum of heaven" where "suspended in mid-air" He "play[s] his game of celestial solitaire," the solitary One "exiled" from the many.[7] Instead of this transcendent God, Spinoza postulates an immanent God whose only existence is in the world of the many. Klein has Spinoza say to his God "thou art the world," recalling the actual claim of the historical Spinoza that nature, the world of the many, is simply the form in which we perceive the One which is God.

The reason why rabbis and priests present God as transcendent is obvious: by claiming that they are the chosen servants of a God who is beyond the world of everyday experience, they can acquire power as members of a ruling élite. In a typical Kleinian pun, the rabbis are said to have made God into a "factotum." A factotum, of course, is a menial servant, but the literal meaning of the word is someone who does everything; by claiming that the omnipotent God, the God who does everything, is transcendent, they have turned him into a servant whom they use for their own ends. The ultimate product of the transcendent religion of the rabbis is the demagogue Shabbathai Zvi who is described in the last section of the poem. Shabbathai Zvi was a contemporary of Spinoza's who claimed to be the Messiah and was accepted as such by most of the Jewish world. He eventually betrayed his followers, causing them immense suffering. As Klein describes him, Shabbathai Zvi perverts a holy ritual whose purpose is to bind men together, by using it to set himself apart from his fellow men. Specifically, he asserts his claim to be the Messiah by performing a public marriage ceremony with the Torah, the scroll containing God's word.

Spinoza, with his philosophy of an immanent One *in* the many, rather than a

transcendent One *apart* from the many, is the precise opposite of Shabbathai Zvi: a true hero rather than a false demagogue. In direct analogy with his immanent God, Spinoza refuses to set himself up to be worshipped. In the end, through his teachings, he exerts a unifying influence on his community which Shabbathai Zvi can only parody. But he exerts this influence unobtrusively from within the garden where he "gather[s] flowers for the One," heroically embodying, in his life as well as in his philosophy, the true vision of the One in the many.

For Klein, the demagogue is always a Shabbathai Zvi, a kind of transcendent God thrown up by a frightened multitude which needs to be reassured by hearing its many voices echoed back from a figure who can arouse a sense of worship. The demagogue is essentially passive and uncreative, a hollow personality constructed out of clichés, who, in the absence of the true hero, simply magnifies all that is most superficial, least vital in the people he claims to lead. In *The Hitleriad*, Klein says of Hitler, the most evil of demagogues:

> through him, magnified
> Smallness comes to our ken —
> The total bigness of
> All little men.

The hero, like the immanent God, the One *in* the many, never sets himself above his people to be worshipped. Unlike the demagogue he is not a public figure: he is hidden, private. As far as his people are consciously aware, he might as well not exist. Uncle Melech speaks of the version of creation in the Cabbala, the Jewish mystical tradition: "there [was] fashioned Aught from Naught," something from nothing. The Cabbala speaks of the Creator as "Naught," as nothing, because he cannot be perceived apart from his creation; if we try to look for the One apart from the many what we see is precisely nothing.[8] The same is true of the hero who works in hidden, unobtrusive ways creatively unifying the society whose profoundest ideas he embodies. In the most real sense of the word the hero does not exist apart from his society since his identity as a particular individual is what is least important about him. His real existence, all that really matters about him, is the unifying influence he exerts on his society. Because he works through his society's deepest, most unconscious levels, the hero is likely to be misunderstood and perceived as a threat rather than as a saviour. But, though rejected, it is he and he alone who can give continuing life to the community of which he is a part. As Klein says of Joseph: "Rooted in the common soil, he turns his eyes to new directions."

Klein gives other examples of the true hero, besides Spinoza. The Poet in "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape" leaves fame to demagogic "impostors," and accepts his anonymity as a condition for his true heroic task of creation; he "makes of his status as zero a rich garland, / a halo of his anonymity."

Uncle Melech is similarly anonymous. In his death, as in his life, he brings his people together, but we never see him apart from them: the only photograph of him is a multiple exposure. Like all true heroes, Uncle Melech is a "great efflorescent impersonality," a flowering out into the many, uniting his whole society, but doing so impersonally, without the personal fame and worship which is the motive of the demagogue.

The great danger of the demagogue is that, although he is a self-interested manipulator, the impulse he appeals to is, at bottom, a genuine one: the desire of a fragmented people for unity. Klein's portrayal of the demagogue is at its most powerful when he can make us feel this appeal, which he himself feels at the deepest level of his being, and, at the same time, can alert us to its dangers. Klein's attack on Hitler in *The Hitleriad* is such a dismal failure because he is so repelled by Hitler that he presents him as simply a disgusting buffoon who could not possibly appeal to any feelings that a decent person might share. A demagogue who is merely a buffoon is of no interest; one who, like the Orator in "Political Meeting," taps the same depths of feeling as the true hero is much more dangerous.[9]

In "POLITICAL MEETING," a community is united in a "ritual," a quasi-religious ceremony complete with cross ("the agonized Y"), "surplices," and "gargoyles." It is a kind of communion, and the moment when the Orator arises recalls the elevation of the Host — "The Orator has risen!" But there is something wrong with this ritual; it is directed towards a false god, an "idol" who is using a solemn ritual of unification for the purpose of being "worshipped," just as Shabbathai Zvi does in "Out of the Pulver and the Polished Lens."

The disturbing quality of this ritual is suggested by Klein's description of the crowd singing the traditional song of "the ritual bird":

> suddenly some one lets loose upon the air
> the ritual bird which the crowd in snares of singing
>
> catches and plucks, throat, wings, and little limbs.
> Fall the feathers of sound, like *alouette's.*

In summarizing "Alouette," which describes the plucking of a bird, he makes it seem sinister. He describes it as a kind of dismemberment, suggesting, through an image we have come to recognize, that the ritual which we are observing is one of destruction and not of creation. The sense of the sinister increases in the description of the crowd waiting outside to hear the words of the Orator:

> (Outside, in the dark, the street is body-tall,
> flowered with faces intent on the scarecrow thing
> that shouts to thousands the echoing
> of their own wishes.) . . .

The street outside has become a single body; the community has been re-membered. The sense of oneness is further emphasized by the flower image, "flowered with faces." But again we feel there is something wrong. The crowd is not being creatively transformed into a true unity; it is merely listening to its wishes being passively echoed back to it. It is an "idol" the people want, something they have made for themselves out of their own sense of frustration.

All this prepares for the Orator and for the image of the sunflower seeds with which he is immediately linked. By now, some of the resonance of this image should be clear. Continuing the image of the flowered faces in the previous stanza, it calls up the numerous associations of flowers with the One in the many through Klein's work. In particular, it recalls Spinoza "in the Holland *sun* . . . gathering *flowers* for the One." The image of the sunflower occurs again in Klein's only other poem which refers to Camillien Houde, and it does so to the exact same effect. In "Parade of St. Jean Baptiste," "the rotund mayor"[10] is presiding over the annual celebration in which the Québécois assert their sense of oneness. In a phrase recalling "flowered with faces," the crowd is described as having "flowering faces," and the parade as a whole is a huge bouquet of flowers. There are "gay attitudes of flowers," "wards and counties burgeoning hero / ribbons and countenances," "badinage of petals." Most important, though, is the phrase "this rich spectacle turned heliotropic." "Heliotrope" is, of course, another name for sunflower.

The image of the sunflower seeds, then, suggests that, although the Orator is a demagogue, a Shabbathai Zvi, he has some of the appeal of a true hero, a Spinoza. On the one hand he consciously manipulates the crowd for his own purposes; but on the other he has genuine links with his people. He really does feel himself at one with them, and they feel the same. "He has them, kith and kin," the poet says, and we can read this two ways: he has them in his power now, or they are his own kinspeople.

The climax of the Orator's speech is an attack on conscription and on "the clever English" whose policy it is. Although the Orator is attacking a policy which Klein wholeheartedly supported, he is doing so by appealing to some of the things which Klein holds most dear: "the virtue of being *Canadien* / of being at peace, of faith, of family." Klein sympathizes with the fears the Orator is exploiting: his description of the cross as "an agonized Y" suggests, through a pun, that he understands how conscription must seem to the Québécois who are losing their loved ones in a war which means nothing to them. But it is precisely the genuineness of the Orator's appeal which makes it most dangerous, for it allows him to draw his people together in a way which perverts their potential for good into one for evil:

> The whole street wears one face,
> shadowed and grim; and in the darkness rises
> the body-odour of race.

The disgusting smell of the tightly packed crowd, of its one re-membered "body," becomes, as "the body-odour of race," a vivid image of the evil which arises from the false unity which a demagogue can impose on his followers by eloquently echoing their fears and prejudices.[11] The Orator has brought his followers together, but only to divide them more completely against others of their fellow men. This is a grotesque and evil parody of the true unity which the hero creates by drawing on the most valuable impulses of his people, impulses which perhaps only he is consciously aware of. The Orator, like all demagogues, has perverted what should have been a ritual of re-membering into one of dismembering. In the words of Uncle Melech, the Orator and the rest of his kind "would be like gods; but since the godlike touch of creation was not theirs, like gods would they be in destructions." Behind the figure who presents himself as an Uncle Melech or a Spinoza we see a Shabbathai Zvi; the true nature of the "country uncle with sunflower seeds in his pockets" is clear.

NOTES

[1] "Commentary," *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*, August 16, 1940, p. 4.

[2] Milton Wilson notes the parallel and comments, "for one awful moment [we] see the shadow of Uncle Melech rising up behind the Camillien Houde who is his parody." "Klein's Drowned Poet: Canadian Variations on an Old Theme," *Canadian Literature*, no. 6; rpt. in *A. M. Klein*, ed. Tom Marshall (Toronto: Ryerson, 1970), p. 94.

[3] See Marshall's Introduction, p. x; John Matthews, "A. M. Klein and the Problem of Synthesis" in Marshall, p. 144; and G. K. Fischer, *In Search of Jerusalem: Religion and Ethics in the Writings of A. M. Klein* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1975), p. 76.

[4] "The method [of *The Second Scroll*] is . . . of a piece with the patterning of diverse and seemingly discontinuous facts of experience characteristic of Klein's best poetry." Malcolm Ross, "Review," in Marshall, p. 89.

[5] For other examples, see "Elegy," "Address to the Choirboys," "Diary of Abraham Segal, Poet," and "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape." Dismemberment imagery in "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape" is particularly interesting. In sections ii and vi, the poet's vision of the true nature of language is presented in terms of a whole body. The poet's society has tried to replace the poet's whole language with "bartlett," a collection of dismembered fragments: Milton Wilson speaks of "an Orpheus dismembered into Bartlett's Quotations" ("Klein's Drowned Poet," p. 94).

[6] The image of flowers in a garden reaching towards the sun is an ancient symbol of the relationship between the Creator and the created. See Stanley Stewart, *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and the Image in Seventeenth Century Poetry* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1966).

[7] For Klein's rejection of the concept of a transcendent God, see "Browning's Blasphemy," *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*, June 11, 1948, p. 9. Browning's blasphemy is that he claims "God's in his heaven," that, as Klein indignantly puts it, "He confines himself to heaven! . . . He does not intrude upon earth!"

[8] For a discussion of the Cabbalistic doctrine of "Aught from Naught," see Fischer, pp. 96-98.

[9] In his Introduction, Tom Marshall argues that Klein's "vision of unity" would have been "more profound" if he had had "a greater awareness" that "man's wish to be the One generates both what he calls good and what he calls evil" (p. xiv). I argue that Klein was fully aware of this, and it is precisely this awareness which gives his vision of unity its profundity.

[10] If this were not enough to identify Houde, the mayor's reference to himself as "Cyrano" would be. Houde had a notoriously large nose and as a young man he "tried to hide his chagrin by playing a magnificent Cyrano de Bergerac in small theatrical companies." Eva-Lis Wuorio, "The One and Only Houde," *Maclean's*, December 15, 1947, p. 7.

[11] For other examples of Klein's use of odour to suggest evil, see "Not All the Perfumes of Arabia," Version I and II, and *The Second Scroll*, pp. 64-65.

WHERE AM I GOING

Tom Wayman

I remember walking on a dirt road through the woods
one autumn afternoon as a child,
not far from a lake, with adults,
the sumach beside us
already crimson in the sunlight
and a small, chill wind — I am wearing a coat —
blowing down red and yellow leaves
where birds call, as we pass.

And the years afterwards
I belonged to the organizations
that went camping,
or my enjoyment now
of a breeze billowing the canvas of my tent,
are as though I could someday
be on a trail descending a ridge,
worrying as always
about the hour, or the weather, or about animals,
and at the bottom enter a wood
in October, and come upon an old road
and follow it, until ahead of me
I am aware of figures
— a man, a woman, and a child —
and find myself once more
walking securely in the turning seasons,
safe, in another time.