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What Words? An Exploration of Temporality and Language through Poetry

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What Words?

An Exploration of Temporality and Language through Poetry
This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of Languages and Literatures.

[Signatures and dates]
# Table of Contents

Preface.......................................................................................................................... i-xi  
Poems................................................................................................................................. 1  
What Words....................................................................................................................... 2  
Movements.......................................................................................................................... 3  
Guadalupe Hill................................................................................................................... 4  
Gold Creek (Angeles Forest)........................................................................................... 5  
Ocean Recollections......................................................................................................... 6  
First Fall Leaf................................................................................................................... 9  
Me and Utah...................................................................................................................... 10  
Passing Through: Deserted Roads................................................................................... 12  
At a Station....................................................................................................................... 13  
Atlanta Airport.................................................................................................................. 14  
Rising............................................................................................................................... 15  
Pause............................................................................................................................... 16  
The Process of Dawn....................................................................................................... 17  
Absence of Presence......................................................................................................... 18  
Highway 2....................................................................................................................... 19  
Dreaming Aloud.............................................................................................................. 20
Preface

Poetry is now; it contains the past and the present. There are two essential aspects of poetry that make it what it is: time and language. I have directed my attention towards these two aspects of poetry because I believe that poetry is immortal. Time is always running away from us; as we grow older, we find less and less time and wonder where it all went. But the language of poetry runs side by side with time; memories and words are what we’re left with in the end, and even they can be taken from us.

There is yet another aspect of poetry that has intrigued me. Dream states, periods where consciousness is nothing, illuminate the creative process of poetry; our dreams instill us with a sense of mystery and magic, the same elements that are found in poetry. Dreams are another part of our reality; however, dreams are the antithesis of language and time—that is to say, the organic matter of dreams by nature has no time, and often dreams are indescribable. Much like poetry, their origins are still a mystery to us. Moreover, dreams unfold just as poems do: through images. Dreams and poems are based on real experience, but they are both pieces of fiction—this is not to say that they should be less valued though. Dreams possibly contain a glimpse of our eternal dream: the pursuit of immortality, which is contained in poetry.

I began my thesis as a critical study on the poetics of T. S. Eliot and Octavio Paz. I wanted two things from this research project: familiarize myself with the poetic theories of Eliot and Paz while at the same time experience their poems in conjunction with each poet’s theory. However, I found myself attracted to the poems more than the theories and the criticism of the theories—naturally, though, since another discovery I made is that reading poems is a form of research for poets. But this is not to say that my scholarly
research was just a waste. On the contrary, I learned something valuable: I prefer to spend my time writing and reading poems instead of conducting scholarly research, at least at this point in my youth.

Up until the end of this project, I was not exactly sure how to present my thesis. I knew I wanted it to be about my writing primarily and about my influences secondarily. This preface serves to discuss first my influences, Eliot and Paz, and to explain their poetic theories, as well as the philosophical concerns with time and language in poetry. The collection of poems is my thesis; it shows best what I learned from my research and how I applied it to my writing.

Eliot and Paz are similar in more ways than they are different. Eliot holds that a poet must be personally detached from a poem in order to be able to write poetry. The poet is not concerned with his own ego as an individual, but as an individual among a collective ego. The voice in the "Four Quartets" explains this personal detachment:

The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,
*Erhebung* without motion, concentration
Without elimination, both a new world
And the old made explicit, understood. (60-67)
This detachment plays an important role in Eliot's impersonal theory of poetry. Similarly, Paz also believes that there is an impersonal aspect in the act of writing; however, he uses a different term for this detachment: otherness. In "Writing," the speaker asks, "who drives the pen?" Later in the poem, the speaker answers:

Someone in me is writing, moves my hand,
hears a word, hesitates,
halted between green mountain and blue sea....
He writes to anyone, he calls nobody,
to his own self he writes, and in himself forgets,
and is redeemed, becoming me again. (8-18)

In Paz's view, the other is the author's persona, a transformation of the poet, a momentary incarnation of a mythical figure. This impersonal aspect of the personas of both poets leads to the exploration between the poet, time, and language.

The most prominent topics of both poets' works are the concepts of time and language and their relation to the poet. For Eliot, tradition is a living organism that comprises the past and the present, a constant mutual interaction of the two. On the other hand, Paz contends that the past and tradition has to be shattered in order for the present to be eminent. Eliot and Paz agree that language belongs not only to the poet, but also to the history of literature, culture, and humanity—that is, the poet expresses words, ideas, and emotions that are passed down through time and generations; what we speak has already been spoken by those before us. Language, for Eliot and Paz, transcends time; it is always evolving and will continue to do so. However, although Eliot and Paz agree that language transcends time and history, their views of the creation of language differ in a
very subtle way. Eliot’s view of language is very traditional: the poet can only expand and develop the different uses of language. Only through knowing the history of literature is the poet able to write poetry. For Paz, though, the tradition of literature must be broken; the poet must create a new language, one that is born from the poet’s own environment.

Eliot was interested in preserving the traditions of English literature. In his essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” Eliot argues that the poet must have a “historical sense” in order to write poetry:

The historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole world of literature and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence. (100)

In other words, the poet is an embodiment of time past and time present. The poet is compelled to know the history of literature. Once the poet has acquired a sense of the past and its language, only then is the poet able to use that language in the present to create poetry. The opening lines of the “Four Quartets” illustrate this concept:

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past. (1-3)

A historical sense requires that a poet be able to shift back and forth from the past to the present.

According to Eliot, a poet, by choosing to be a poet, has certain responsibilities.

In another essay entitled “The Social Function of Poetry,” Eliot writes:
The duty of the poet, as poet, is only indirectly to his people: his direct duty is to his language, first to preserve, and second to extend and improve. (9)

Since language carries with it the history of past generations, the first task of the poet is to preserve that language by continuing the tradition. The second task of the poet is to extend and improve language. For Eliot, the poet is embedded in the language of the past—extending and improving this language means that the poet has to recognize that the history of language is always present; thus, the poet is only able to advance the quality of language: make it better, stretch it out through time, move it forward while holding on to the past. Again, in the “Four Quartets,” the voice points out the poet’s interaction with the past:

What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
Footfalls echo in the memory....
My words echo
Thus, in your mind....
Other echoes
inhabit the garden. (9-20)

The echoes are the literary voices of the past resonating in the present. It is obvious that Eliot insists on the interaction of the past and the present when writing poetry.

Like Eliot, Paz also explores the history of language and literature but with a different intent. In his book “The Bow and the Lyre,” Paz writes, “Words transcend language as a given system of historical meanings. The poem, without ceasing to be word
and history, transcends history” (37). For Paz, language derives its meaning from history, but at the same time, the poet transcends the history of the language and creates a new world of meaning. Language can be reformed and transformed. The poet creates a new identity, a new language when writing poetry, one that is not predicated on the past. For instance, in “The endless instant,” the voice of the poem confirms:

The time is past already for hoping for time’s arrival, the time of yesterday, today and tomorrow,
yesterday is today, tomorrow is today, today all is today....
it doesn’t come from the past, it is not going anywhere, today is here. (19-25)

In order to obliterate the past, the poet must transcend the limitations of the past. The poet must create a new system, one that allows for newer and freer forms of expression. The poet must break the chains of history in order to be free.

Paz believes that there is an essential act that the poet must perform in order to create poetry. He writes:

Poetic creation begins as violence to language. In this operation is the uprooting of words. The poet wrests them from their habitual connections and they become unique, as if they had just been born. The poem is an original and unique creation. (The Bow 40)

The violence of language is an act that destroys the old and creates a path for the new. The poet is both a destroyer and a creator. It is true that the poet must dig language from the dirt of the past, but at the same time the poet rebels against the dry and spoiled use of
common meaning. Instead, the poet unearths words, which are embedded in the poet's own being, as Paz writes in the "Prologue" to his *early poems*: "Against the silence and noise I invent the Word, freedom that invents itself and invents me everyday" (5).

However, there is a social force that opposes the creation of poetry. According to Paz, "Separated from their habitual functions, words offer an irritating resistance. All creation engenders ambiguity" (*The Bow* 47). When a poet creates new language, there is a distancing from common meaning. Words are embedded with meaning—meaning that contains history—and the history of a meaning of a word is always present. Therefore, when the poet creates new meaning to a word, there is a plurality of meanings, an ambiguity. This ambiguity, though, is the essence of the *other*. For Paz creation consists in bringing forth certain words that are inseparable from the poet's being. Personal language means common language revealed or transfigured by the poet. The poet transforms language.

After reading the theories of Eliot and Paz, I came to my own conclusion, which was to fuse the two. First, I agree with Eliot that tradition must be followed, for the language of poetry has developed from the past and continues to progress in the present. By writing this thesis, I myself am following Eliot and Paz's traditions. However, at the same time I agree with Paz: the only way that language develops is by breaking away from the meanings of old words and old worlds and creating new ones. Every poet must find his or her own voice. I feel that language is divided; it liberates us and limits us. As I write these words at this very moment (the present), they immediately become part of the past and are then present in the future (right now while they are being read), which is now the past, and...well, the infinite regress of the progress of time and language.
Language is frail. While I know that words are a part of human history, I also realize that as an individual I am lost within that history. In Paz’s “East Slope,” the voice admits:

I know what I know and I write it
The embodiment of time
the act
the movement in which the whole being
is sculptured and destroyed
Consciousness and hands to grasp the hour
I am a history
a memory inventing itself
I am never alone
I speak with you always
you speak with me always
I move in the dark
I plant signs. (1-13)

Even though I can invent myself through my own words, my contempt for language remains, for my words will also become a part of the past in the future. Eliot’s “Four Quartets” echoes in my mind:

Words move, music moves
Only in time; but that which is only living
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.
Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
Not that only, but the co-existence,
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.
And all is always now. Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Will not stay still. (122-37)

I remember someone telling me once that we can never say anything new; we can only say it in a new way. I am now ready to spread my echoes like wings through the reflections of my history. I want to let my words be carried into the winds towards myself. I write to revive the past and to live in the present, leaving behind seeds for the future.

The poems that follow express my discontent with language. In them, I explore my own concepts about the nature of language, time, and dream states. For instance, we move through space and time. Space expands and contracts; time extends and regresses. So, how do we capture our moments in time? Through words? Is our past always with us, or does the past become the present, which is always becoming the future? The world moves. We move, as individuals, and as one in being and becoming human. The seasons
change, and we change too. Moving from place to place can either dissipate or create our individual identity.

This is my first attempt to unify my poetry. The sequential order of the poems follows three themes, language, time, and dream states; however, they all intermingle. These poems serve primarily as an exploration of me as a poet and the poets that have inspired my work, namely Eliot and Paz. Again, as a young poet, my main goal is to excel as a writer and along the way show how my writing has developed, as well as from where its inspirations arise.
Works Consulted


Poems
What Words?

What words may come of age in a sea where tongues twist
tattered together by the blending blossom of battered dreams

words worn like ghostly
nightgowns

words torn in the turning
sunrise

words born in the esophagus
an apocalypse of ancient evolution

What words may come that part the lip to spill words dripping
down the skin sorrowful songs
spoken in soft language of night

words that vanish in the wind

words that mimic body movement
but embrace the ankled bracelet of the soul

what vowel will howl the waned birth of the moon
a new testament of god and dawning death

what noun will denounce my day
when stars are seen under
down in dirty street lights

what withered words will watch over me

what words?
Movements

Movement in a crowd is steady—
Rusted boughs, each step concrete
Incinerated feet sweep, stow
Side by side, swaying undefined.

Movement in a crowd is heavy—
Trembling leaves, stirred loose boots,
Formless conversations collect,
Forged from rising summer suns.

Movements of a choir transcend—
Voices of Orion gasping, breathing
Air swallowed transformed into sound,
Echoes, ancient rheumatic sorrow.

Movements of a choir descend—
The swift glide of a sparrow’s wing;
Shadow’s light feather-weight glow
Turns by twilight’s break of night.

Movements of the season spiral—
Lyrical moments in the mind
When mountains rumble,
Fumbling tongues, oceanic songs.

Movements of the season are still.
And if one moves, who would notice
The missing grid to this axis.
Guadalupe Hill

The train crawls down the line—
bellies on tracks of steel,
rusted wheels grinding down the steel.

Children sled down the hill—
bellies covered in crystal powder,
while sleds glide, leaving trails on the ground.

The sun-white day almost over—
earth’s grass smothered in cold white snow;
the green covered beneath a sea of foot prints.

The young screams have faded old—
the joy-green echoes only heard;
the day drowned in horn and hail.

In the silent stir of words—
sleds abandoned, left to freeze,
only remnants forgotten in this attempt

to capture a handful of snow, but slowly these words melt.
Gold Creek (Angeles Forest)

Heading towards the ends of high cliffs,
hiking along the ridge of the mountain,
we spoke of creeks, ponds, and songs.

The valleys were stricken with wind,
the mountains pinned and poised—
our echoes whistled.

The hills glistened new green
from the young light coming down
as the seesaw sun hid between each one,
but actually we were the ones going up and down the trail.

The trees were golden, hugging the light—
only a mirror could describe what we saw.

Every leaf was light sparkling transfixed.

We climbed higher, singing louder
through halls of hollow forest.
Then we came across a creek which sang back to us—
the rocks in the pond mimicked the water,
drumming the beat, keeping to the rhythm of our feet.

We reached the top,
where the wind carried our yells.

We tread a narrow path;
Each step permanent, an imprint—
stones dwell in the ground.
The stream bleeds around them. Now,

only our voices remain.
Ocean Recollections

1. Ola (O, L.A.)

In the distance of my memory,
glittery pieces of glass flash sun,
reflecting off the ocean water moving,
in waves, the subtle rush thunder crash,
the salt taste of my skin,
the seagulls kamikaze fishing,
and the breeze rustling my hair,
same breeze running through the city,
muttering my breath.

The water, the weather,
all this rooted in me,

I am unable to grasp to that which I hold and holds me—
my last words freeze in the cold of my mind.

Tomorrow the worms will warm the earth.

2. Formation

A perfect wave forms from afar,
grinding the surface of the ocean
like a memory overlapping moments—
each one has its own voice,
each one from the same force.

I was too young then to know when to take a wave in.
I was too young. I did not know.

The wind changes everything.
The waves begin to break, chop.

The lamenting sea and me—
waves of errant consciousness
caught in rip currents: washed, rinsed, finished.
I should’ve listened to my mom
when she said, stay, son, stay.

Now I only hear the echoes of the waves.
3. Fins and Board

As soon as my toes grip through
grains of sand soaked in foam—
Venus’ kiss—I enter the water.
The rocks break the rhythm of the sea—
the splattered splash of drops unplotted like blots of ink.

I hear the crash calling me, calling me
to prepare to let myself on board,
taking me where I fear to go:
away and where I came from.

I’m caught between myself and seaweed.

4. Circulation

The sea beats, feeds, kills, beating on and on.

I have bathed in waters of death.
Water revolves around through many tongues and shores,
taking. What is left?

5. Sunset

First the sky turns purple,
light pink ribboned clouds
and the red, red sun sinking down.

While the orange glow is almost over,
the sky twilight blue, I stand barefoot,
sand rushing through my hands.

No matter how tight a grip I fist,
the gaps never close—the day remains
until we wake and know
night has come.

6. Birds

The gray cry of all the seagulls,
the one inch stick foot of every finch,
and the lucky pelican all drink from these waters.
I try to purify my skin in salt, hope
one day to understand the birds—
call them all by name.
Their wings naturally know
the way of the waves,
how to ride the breeze one way, stop,
change direction, descend, and then ascend again.

If only I could imitate the motion of their wings.
If only words could ride the wind.
First Fall Leaf

First Fall leaf
I encountered in front of me—
across my path I stepped ahead of it,
passing by.

First Fall leaf,
behind me the summer of your yellow,
the green tips between seasons,
the veins worn out by rain.

First Fall leaf,
fall, leaf, fall!
Me and Utah

1. Brian Head

Top of Utah:
straight ahead joint clouds
under my feet upon a broken ridge, I
11,000 feet away from close to home.

The clouds stick to the mountain sides—
the shelled turtle-tops whistle
while living on air-thin deep—

hovering under me happy in lonely.

Not another human being alive.
I dead alone.

The cedar trees cracked,
broken by warm suns
which disintegrate the morning fog—
creeping dawn mute.

The pines are bare—ready
for snowfall covered leaves.

2. Castleville Meadow

The colors of Fall rise
on top, the red rocks rest
shaped by the shaking of time.

Underneath the wreath of clouds,
trees begin to shed dead brown,
bearing cold chill chirp of birds soft.

The only green in me remains,
coated frost bitten yellow.

The meadows are mellow encapsulated.

Oh morning subtly whispering me,
let the gold embroider me in green.
3. Cedar Creek

The river runs
down from frozen mountain tops
rolling silver sounds instilled.

Suddenly a family of deer approaches me,
three in all.
First they run past my car—
how near they were,
and I stuck in metal, looking through a window.
Passing Through: Deserted Roads

Passing into the past
the last clouds disintegrate
in the distant desert sun.

A time to escape
The shapes of my bones—
Dangling shingles of marrow-stone.

Sand castles outlined in gold
by green desert heat, long streets
And concrete alloy miles away.

The wind, rain, and dust
turning daytime night
into dusk.

(Open Sun take me in—show me what I’ve been)

Climbing gravel and grades
crushing crystal hearts along the way—
A prick of rippled rain.

Clouds painted in the sky
by a master’s brush—
A thunderous touch.

Bolts penetrate the crust—
Consciousness perhaps pain;
Pleasure dressed in destitute.

Hazy sunshine, blinding light
dim dream, burning bright—
the unknown road; and I all alone.

(Open Sun over me—tell me what I’ll be)
At a Station

In the train, daylight dwells into the night;
hours lost, looking through a tinted gaze.

My reflection etched onto the black glass—
through fenestrations, a vision.

I left tracks and my baggage free to claim,
hoping a stranger would pick up what remains.

The train tracks I remember well—how they dive,
merge further down the road,
forged in different directions.
The train ride became
a way of life.

Passing through mountains, parallel to the ocean,
I left a trail of dust, my past.
The horizon
blends into the heavens; swells rising
and falling tides collide, crash,
tumble onto broken crags.

Night comes and crawls through cracks into the cab;
sleep whispers, but the roaring engine keeps me wake.

Suddenly the soft glow of the sun swirls—
a year becomes a dream in a second.

I take a breath and exit through the gate,
grab my bags and head towards the light.

The faces I’ve faced await in my mind—
I look up: through the sky a plane flies by.
Atlanta

Landing, the plane’s wings misty rained;
I step on black wet pavement—
Concourse B be my destination, my rally to Raleigh.

The airport smells of musty rust, bodies rush to reach their gate.
I was late, no matter though, since the flight has been delayed.

The night delays the day. I woke first light
now the light in three hours flight has yielded its luminescence.

I sit on the floor against a white pole next to the man by the electric trashcan.

Voices echo against the grain of time, a single speck floating—
like the many feet we meet in the streets
the faces down the alley we once thought we knew,
feet moving rhythmically to an unknown beat—
keep going ‘til your reach where you please.

I’ve seen these faces before, not here or there,
but before and then when beginning meets end.

How I find myself looking up—
the girls are warm here; their skin golden,
brown blonde hair,
but do not stare, do not stare.

The eye leads the mind where the mind finds the eye.

I have seen myself looking at myself
sitting against a white pillar.
In what dream have I dreamt myself dreaming?

I am who I was, being who I am.

Still the silence. Listen. The call comes
do not sleep, oh please, do not sleep.

Now boarding.
Rising

I rise to find that days are my dreamlands;
as dusk descends the taut tick-tock of time—
I see that night is like a lake of sand.

Break through bleak sun, survive the sin of man!
I hear this chant of changing clouds in mind.
I rise to find that days are my dreamlands.

When time has told my fearful fate, I stand
and stare at stars to free my self and fly
but see that night, is like a lake of sand.

Air wakes us all with just and gentle hands,
as winds are wands of wondrous tales—
then I, arise, and find that days are my dreamlands.

Life’s dream will end as daily plans expand,
if one does not proceed with pearling eyes—
realize, that night is like a lake of sand.

My deeds, concealed and unsecured, are damned.
I have arrived into a tale of lies
to rise and find that days are my dreamlands,
where night is swarthy like a lake of sand.
Pause

"Per me si va ne la citta dolente,
per mi si va ne l'eterno dolore,
per mi si va tra la perduta gente."

"Through me you shall go to the city of pain,
through me you shall know eternal pain,
through me you shall go through the lost people."

-Dante’s Inferno, Canto III

For a second, hold still
surrounded by sound and thought,
remember to brake before reaching
the ancient port, awaiting patiently,
sweeping through memories,
muses, forgotten tales once told in childhood;
collapsed clusters of the past.

For a lifetime, lose last hope,

gear off the right road,
breach the blink of sleep,
the sudden calling that brings us
back into the deep;
travel to where shadows are tomorrow’s windows,
a corner of the sky,
an illusion through the eye,
a reflection in the mirror
or simply the solitary nights
under bright black space
when time escapes
and dreams awake
the dawn of day.
The Process of Dawn

I’ve slept all day and dreamt the coming of night.
Shadows follow my footsteps—
I’ve dreamt where it all begins.

The sky once black, flushes forth
like the waves of the ocean changing
colors blend themselves. The heavens descend,

a single, scattered cloud hanging
the dark blue morning.
I can see through the cloud past the abyss.

A star glints in the distance—
dawn has swallowed its glow.
Slowly, I awake and fall into the day.

Eyes swollen with sleep,
yet I keep reaching, searching for the sound of death—
the end reached, my hands cramped, unable to touch.

Sleep comes creeping like dawn
and these words slip away, drowned
in the sun that is yet to come,

dreams a form of memory of the day,
which moves further, further away.
Absence of Presence

Still, the night moves
always arriving
until the black background against the edged
cool air cuts through my coat.

I think inside and hear a voice,
whose words tremble
like rustling leaves, dark.

No noise except this sound
from within,
from the cry of night.

Suddenly a presence appears,
not mine exactly, but perhaps
a reflection in the sky—

standing still with whispers
in my inner ear, a voice
soundless, full of racket
threatening day.

I listen to discern,
watch when the earth turns
without me,
without being,
without seeing,
by writing these words that confirm
just what and who this voice searches for.
Highway 2

Riding on Highway 2,
Road unmarked; crisp, clear
Sea of dark – bands of white
Sparks spread over skies.

Riding on Highway 2,
Every moment unspoken,
Taking tokens – golden
Pockets full of moon.

Highway 2, I’ve traveled through
Miles of misty mountains,
Up and down dirt-stained space,
And have tasted yellow days.

Roads unpaved, waves of clouds,
Sinking suns, drunk dream nights—
Sound awake,
A moment late,
A breath too soon,
On Highway 2.
Dreaming Aloud

1.

In the clear black sky,
the night ascends, and I
sedated, am wake to its constant mention.

Dreaming silently, I speak of night,
of hurting instant remarks
spoken out loud dry mouths—
no sooner here than gone.

Distantly, the white haze moons over
the night blanketed asleep.

How do I greet you sleep?

Time turns in a shadow, keeping record of our dreams.

Last night the sky sank, and I hung
moon-high nowhere,
consumed by fire:
*Cognosco quem est lucem*—listen without hearing:
to a useless language of infinite regress, and end where I began.

I dreamt of cold sand,
white dust against the surging rush of ocean waves fluttering
back and forth in all forms, further from the shore
where the foam seethes.

I have yet to hear the mermaids.
Wake me now before I drown at sea.

How long the sigh of night.

Soon the sun will be captured by my breath—
it too only a dream.
The bridge between
sleep and waking is still invisible.

2.
In the course of dreams, visions have come, 
their reasons unknown. 
In flesh the ghostly eye is unable to discern 
the inevitable return to world in form— 
such clarity cannot exist. 
Still I must, with lack of tongue, 
the day unfold.

Sound is between heaven, earth, and sea. 
Caught in air is every speech.

I speak morning, 

wake at dusk’s smell of musky wet, cut grass 
while the sun slips above the mountains.

In my eyes the rain of dreams has stopped. 
(I know the weight of rain; I have seen it come my way). 
Light penetrates the root of sight. 
Air quickens the heart to slow.

The note of a distant ghost, 
soul closer to me than I think.

How do I part the morning?

Time fastens us to a slower beat, 
even this rhythm loses its feet.

I wake into an infinitude; 
the sky drowns the eyelids, unable to bear the view, 
too much for the bare soul.

The sun sirens light soundlessly, 
entering transparent, almost near us.

Dim in the shadow of a figure, 
light piercing rushes in..

I go and go, dreaming what I feel, 
always falling away.. 

Why do we wake only to sleep?

The clouded mind is undressed from rest,
sick of rest, wanting more of rest.
And this day is dust dreamt—
night divided light
I am midway between death and life.

I’ve wakened from this dream, watching
through windows the shadow of myself,
only to find I am wakened someone else.

Thoughts turn into words as white as stars,
away from themselves, diving into themselves.

3.

I speak smoke:

Words fumble on the tongue,
vaporized in the sun’s light.

Words, words without end,
words always arriving at an end.

Words running blood from this pen;
my thoughts think themselves.

Words rising spread-open oceans.
O, if just this one moment
they remained falling down
the rain drop-instant of clarity from a distance—
accumulated puddles of water muffled in the dirt
from where they come and always return.

Words remain unknown,
carved in stone crystal clear,
in deeds dead as they are bred.

I shall be remembered only after death.

Words shadowing the meadows of the mind,
memories alive outside of time, inside the kind, bright light,
like candles lit in mid-room—
creeping along, watching the dark retreat.

Where is the wind? Outside my window I hear the wind.

Let me keep this, words,
let me keep this dream until I wake,
let me let myself enter into myself
and rest my head against the sun.