

She has forgotten when she planted the hawthorn hedge;
that thorn, that green, that snow;
birdsong and sun dazzled across the ridge—
it was long ago.

Her hands were strong in the earth, her glance on the sky,
her song was sweet on the wind.
The hawthorn hedge took root, grew wild and high
to hide behind.

NIGGER'S LEAP, NEW ENGLAND

The eastward spurs tip backward from the sun.
Night runs an obscure tide round cape and bay
and beats with boats of cloud up from the sea
against this sheer and limelit granite head.
Swallow the spine of range; be dark, O lonely air.
Make a cold quilt across the bone and skull
that screamed falling in flesh from the lipped cliff
and then were silent, waiting for the flies.

Here is the symbol, and the climbing dark
a time for synthesis. Night buoys no warning
over the rocks that wait our keels; no bells
sound for her mariners. Now must we measure
our days by nights, our tropics by their poles,
love by its end and all our speech by silence.
See in these gulfs, how small the light of home.

Did we not know their blood channelled our rivers,
and the black dust our crops ate was their dust?
O all men are one man at last. We should have known
the night that tided up the cliffs and hid them
had the same question on its tongue for us.
And there they lie that were ourselves writ strange.

Never from earth again the coolamon
or thin black children dancing like the shadows
of saplings in the wind. Night lips the harsh
scarp of the tableland and cools its granite.
Night floods us suddenly as history
that has sunk many islands in its good time.

SONNET

Now let the draughtsman of my eyes be done
marking the line of petal and of hill.
Let the long commentary of the brain
be silent. Evening and the earth are one,
and bird and tree are simple and stand still.
Now, fragile heart swung in your webs of vein,
and perilous self won hardly out of clay,
gather the harvest of last light, and reap
the luminous fields of sunset for your bread.
Blurs the laborious focus of the day
and shadow brims the hillside slow as sleep.
Here is the word that, when all words are said,
shall compass more than speech. The sun is gone;
draws on the night at last; the dream draws on.