

Away, Backstage Clutter AND Baines Court



Duet, Adolph Gottlieb, 1962

Away

Away ten thousand parsecs gyres dust to be a sun, goes
rounding in,

chasing fire...

But here the dust is autumn, where spiders guy to matins'
grass,

tattering fogs drift noons,
passions flock with starlings.

Away ten thousand parsecs births light from vacuum's
marrow,
But here the light is old, conspires with time 'to love and
hate and lyric dance.

Flies the planet outward with its chrysalids and tombs, its
Innocence whipt from Eden into Mays, these augurings of
winter days...

we mortal interstices
bearing legends of perfection—

Backstage Clutter

Nussed with love on their mothers' knees, many've left
already.

They rambled moon's romances, swung from linting
boughs,
Ripened with green apples into knaves and souls high-
hearted,

wore fortune loosely.

Each a cherish or despise, they act no more in time's
orpheum,
But linger here, amid the backstage clutter of my being,
nebulous faces, shimmering traces...

Dear company of players crowding wings, 'waiting cues,
greasepaint on, running lines.

I'll join them by-and-by, become an other's half made-
up accrue,
A stringless fiddle's cry when bowed by reminiscence, as
if,

like coral clinging to a drowned volcano's rim,

I breach tossings of the main, spangle in the sun again...
For an instant or an hour spook the inward muss of one
who met me

on his way to some Esh Sham—

Baines Court

Where we lived when I was four, laundry dried o'er
kitchen stoves;
Houses had no paint, no yards, we played on porches,
a narrow walk,

down which icemen hove frozen mists with tongs...

But we were gay in our poverty, our gray unsmiling
mansions,

or, if not, I've forgotten since.

Our days effloresced to rhythms of the poor, but we, who
didn't know,
Frisked like Croesus' childs, made castles from fabrics of
our artlessness...

Fugitive strands of memory bracing overburdens of
immensity,

Shielding us, for awhile, from the taking tonnes of
nothingness—