

The Rhythms of Reaping

By Richard Zaner

I suppose there might have been a time
— a time of apples and children
of women and glances,
of rain, snow and wild winds —
When things now usual and plain
Were just themselves, shining, when we
In innocence could let them be
(as be they might
Driven in our eyes like eagles
— or in silence shared a while
with no need of words —
Only a holding-fast, keeping by letting them
be, unashamed, what they (and oh, yes, we) are:

I suppose there might have been a time
— of saying like the rhythmed reaping
of grain, plucking of firm fruit,
hands like land, deep and gnarled —
An understanding of the flesh, of earth,
— a doing unfamiliar with the feel
of straight steel or fingers inched
around a hard butt of gun, rifled and
triggered for death

— Beneath a sheath of trees,
There is a time of talking, whispering together
like faintly shifting leaves (or singing)
slipping through the quiet air (like birds' wings)
our minds like picnics
spread softly around a mound of quiet grass —

If such times of knowing (being
are what it's all about

then what is time? Quick paradox of inwardness
(yearning on the further edge of living) for what
was

and ought to be (or have been)
and bear the burden of repetition.

But are we free to give ourselves
(like Plato) to such supposings?
as much sweet myth remembered, these,
as any madrigal that was and is no more.

This yearning in time for time
my self's deepest, faintest
longing for a truth my very own —
put into figured stories (sly indirections)
felt silences (faintly mocking)
the diffident episodes of youth —

To whom offer such celebrations,
these prefaces for remembrance?

On whom depend for understanding:

where we stand under, beneath the bows
of trees, lying, on our backs,
thinking of home and apples,
children and glances from women,
listening for the moving voices
(like birds sleeping in the leaves)

to tell us (now)
in this needful time,
the time we are,
and who, or why?