

DYLAN THOMAS
POEM IN OCTOBER

It was my thirtieth year to heaven
Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood
And the mussel pooled and the heron
Priested shore
The morning beckon
With water praying and call of seagull and rook
And the knock of sailing boats on the net-webbed wall
Myself to set foot
That second
In the still sleeping town and set forth.

My birthday began with the water—
Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name
Above the farms and the white horses
And I rose
In rainy autumn
And walked abroad in a shower of all my days.
High tide and the heron dived when I took the road
Over the border
And the gates
Of the town closed as the town awoke.

A springful of larks in a rolling
Cloud and the roadside bushes brimming with whistling
Blackbirds and the sun of October
Summery
On the hill's shoulder,
Here were fond climates and sweet singers suddenly
Come in the morning where I wandered and listened
To the rain wringing
Wind blow cold
In the wood faraway under me.

Pale rain over the dwindling harbour
And over the sea-wet church the size of a snail
With its horns through mist and the castle
Brown as owls,

But all the gardens
Of spring and summer were blooming in the tall tales
Beyond the border and under the lark-full cloud.

There could I marvel
My birthday
Away but the weather turned around.

It turned away from the blithe country,
And down the other air and the blue altered sky
Streamed again a wonder of summer

With apples
Pears and red currants,
And I saw in the turning so clearly a child's
Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother
Through the parables
Of sun light
And the legends of the green chapels

And the twice told fields of infancy
That his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine.
These were the woods the river and sea

Where a boy
In the listening
Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy
To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide.

And the mystery
Sang alive
Still in the water and singing birds.

And there could I marvel my birthday
Away but the weather turned around. And the true
Joy of the long-dead child sang burning
In the sun.

It was my thirtieth
Year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon
Though the town below lay leaved with October blood.

O may my heart's truth
Still be sung
On this high hill in a year's turning.

HARRY BROWN

PERHAPS FOR A CENOTAPH

Return, O you white wanderers, return,
Pale shrouded ghosts, invaders of the silence,
Who rose as doves rise from a shock of voices,
And entered the horizon.

Memory wavers
Like tapers fixed in a dusty room
And, even as they, devours itself and dies.

GEORGE BARKER

‘WHERE THE KISSING SYSTEMS
TURN’

Where the kissing systems turn
Arm in arm across the sky,
And the sleepless years return
Worn and weary to their high
Stations in astronomy:

There, shaking water at parallax,
Lolling light along distances,
The morning lets the stars relax
And makes a magic among tenses:
Love rises from her bed of senses.

The systems, wheeling in degrees,
Speak in eternal vocables:
‘The heart, in all its allegories,
Shall always walk the stellar allies
Clasping an astrolabe of troubles.’

Thus, crosswise on antinomies,
The angel and the anthropoid,
The wrongs and the responsibilities,—
Making love across a void
Kiss in a shower of pities.