

# CAR

I consider

the time is short now.

Short is the distance. My car

Whether I step on the gas or glide softly

Will in the marked-off time attain its goal:

City by car to the ship and ship to the sea

Then from the ship to the city. . .

Everything that I am is in that coming:

Infinite time allows that coming to be.

So I consider it

easy, take your time;

Move as a man moves who'd pass out safely,

Move as a ladder swung between two cliffs,

Move as a careful captain who sees victory.

Move . . . but the general sits behind a desk,

Peers at his map through glasses, speaks to his runners,

Life is a game to him and his decision

Springs from no action!

Somewhere ahead of the mind's clear picture

Steps with a tragic laugh the soul and body

Out of the known world to the unknown darkness

Down, down, with a swift deed, defying

Death: for what is death, the choice certain?

So when I run I know the tape is broken,

So behind the wheel I thunder lightly,

So the airman covers his unknown seas,

So the spirit conceived the world and left it.

Given the will,

Given the choice. . .

## THIS IS A WOMAN

This is a woman in the next room, moving  
heavily on a bed  
in the silence. Unseen she is living  
and everything else seems dead.

Only a year back beside the river  
I listened to the trees move  
a little and then stop. And with a shiver  
I thought of my love. . .

This is no particular woman. This is only  
a woman on a bed.  
She sleeps and does not dream. She is not lonely,  
nor loves, nor hates. Nor is dead.  
Only she moves. And in her motion  
there is a power,  
great since without use like the ocean  
from hour to hour.

Hers not the hand for thread nor thimbles  
nor even the duty of a wife.

. . .In the trees I no longer see symbols.  
I see life.

SELDEN RODMAN.

## MARVELL'S 'GARDEN'

THE chief point of the poem is to contrast and reconcile conscious and unconscious states, intuitive and intellectual modes of apprehension; and yet that distinction is never made, perhaps could not have been made; his thought is implied by his metaphors. There is something very Far-Eastern about this; I was reminded of it by Mr. Richard's discussion, in a recent *Psyche*, of a philosophical argument out of Mencius. The Oxford edition notes bring out a crucial double meaning (so this at least is not my own fancy) in the most analytical statement of the poem, about the Mind:—

Annihilating all that's made  
To a green Thought in a green shade.

'Either "reducing the whole material world to nothing material, i.e., to a green thought," or "considering the material world as of no value compared to a green thought"'; either contemplating everything or shutting everything out. This combines the idea of the conscious mind, including everything because understanding it, and that of the unconscious animal nature, including everything because in harmony with it. Evidently the object of such a fundamental contradiction (seen in the etymology: turning all *ad nihil*, to nothing, and to a thought) is to deny its reality; the point is not that these two are essentially different but that they must cease to be different so far as either is to be known. So far as he has achieved his state of ecstasy he combines them, he is 'neither conscious nor not conscious,' like the seventh Buddhist stage of enlightenment. (It is by implying something like this, I think, that the puns in Donne's *Extasie* too become more than a simple Freudian give-away). But once you accept this note you may as well apply it to the whole verse.

Meanwhile the Mind, from pleasure less,  
Withdraws into its happiness;  
The Mind, that Ocean where each kind  
Does streight its own resemblance find;