

Working

Asaka, Japan c.1945

The steep thatched roof of the farmhouse in the distance overlooks
 long rows of rice seedlings in which are buried
old sadnesses
 so much work day after day to make that marriage of sun and soil work
under a changing sky the story is unchanging
 row after row hugs the land like
a memory of the past you cannot now know
 now is never when you say it is
it is always a memory now it is silent now the wind rises
 it swells full of the silvery sounds of rain in darkness &
the clean rush of rain when night sweeps in
 now you take my hand in yours & open it
now my palms are pressing yours pressing the angry red flesh
 that will not relinquish its rage
now it is night now you are up pacing pacing a world away
 now you are the son of fears that have taken up arms & will not be beaten
their red-eyed dead haunt me what is it
 why is it the fox thou hast found me out
why this wilderness now I am forsaken
 a leper to what I was
now mind is a memory
 body is a memory now here I am the wind the dark wind is rising
now you are among the fallen
 their slender stone urns have gone soft with age and moss
and the slender arms of their stone lovers stretch out
 to one another now there is still time
working the farmer bends over the rows in his field
 working