

## *Seward Park*

*to R. D. Austen  
Seattle 1989*

On a pale-lit, near spring day  
- how long ago I dread to think-  
we walked along the water of that lakeside park.  
The chill as yet uncracked by the warming calls of birdlife,  
though a surprising gentleness had all at once invaded  
the stillness of our afternoon.-

An anticipating glow brought suddenly to mind  
The passing of the private season and  
just because we lacked a better pretext for companionship,  
we had come here ahead of the eager strolling masses,  
who spilled their laughing loud activities all summer  
onto the as yet barely breathing water..

By the jetty we stood, looked north a while, where  
white in white, clouds and water but for a hairline fused,  
reduced our conversation to the cautious dripping of  
half-formed sentences, that but keep the momentum of togetherness  
afloat, yet deny it purpose or direction..

The small peninsula curved out and  
slowly in again to where people built their houses..  
From here on every step would lead us back;  
so gradually we had come to a halt,  
stepped from the path onto the shore's gravel...  
The noise froze our steps and put an end to talking.

There, all over, quivering in place, wild geese  
had left their feathers – hundreds - before flying on.  
They had shed what had become unnecessary:  
Long graceful curves, still murmuring of lengthy journeys along fixed  
and sacred routs, of abrupt, instinctual parting and  
the unwritten promise of something like return..