

V A R I A T I O N S   T O   T H E  
A C C O M P A N I M E N T   O F   A   C L O U D



W .   S .   M E R W I N

*Because I do not hope ever again*  
to pass this way I sing these  
notes now in silence  
each in its own time  
one morning near the end of spring  
among the invisible unheard stars I sing  
this one time with the hope that is here  
in every breath  
may these notes be heard another morning  
in another life  
in another spring together

*Because I do not hope ever to pass*  
*this way again*  
one morning late in spring  
in the cold rain above the valley I sing  
in the old house I came to in my youth  
on the ridge looking over the river  
a house that had been left to its own silence  
for half a century  
home for bats and swallows and patches  
of sunlight wandering across the floors  
under holes in the roof on the day  
I first saw it  
and recognized it without knowing it  
above the same river

*Because I do not hope to see again*  
 this spring morning with its cloud of light  
 that wakes the blackbird in the trees downhill  
 from the house I came to long ago  
 when I was young and the silence  
 was a summer day  
 that first summer that I would see  
 from these windows  
 I came to see  
 the plum trees flowering on the slope below  
 the snow swirling outside the kitchen  
 I will not see this morning fill  
 with light again along the green field  
 under the walnut trees those silent ancients  
 I reach out to it with words  
 it never hears

*Because I do not hope ever to find  
 my way again* to the moments of pure  
 single fortune and the unrepeatable mistakes  
 that led me here  
 I look back in wonder  
 at how I found you and we came to be here  
 where has it gone  
 never was there one step backward

*Although I do not hope to know again*  
 what I have known since the beginning  
 not for a moment has it left me  
 I keep looking for what has always been mine  
 searching for it even as I  
 think of leaving it  
*my love was always  
 woven with leaving*  
 moment by moment leaving  
 the one time