

The background of the cover is a red-tinted photograph of a rural landscape. In the middle ground, there is a house with a chimney. To the right, a tall, dark chimney stands prominently. The foreground is a field, possibly of crops or grass. The overall tone is monochromatic red.

Maybe Once
In A While

volume one

2003 Chapbook
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R. Paul Craig

The End Time

Upright in
darkening
air like a
tarot card
lost inside
her too
large costume
mute and
solitary
sorrowful
laughable
and yet
unavoidable
hardly present
at all and yet
profoundly
palpably
there
possessed it
seems of a
secret knowledge
her victim
her ineluctable
judge.

The Attic

Here
is the
attic
a long
broad
tent-
shaped
shadowed
place with
a dazzling
dizzyling
pillar of
sunlight
suspended
at an angle
smell of dust
and apples and
sweetish stink
of decaying
timbers the odd
acoustics of the

place took her
words and made
of them an un-
intelligible booming
she listened to the
echoes ricochet and
fall like needles as
unseen birds
murmured
lasciviously
in the eaves
she felt like a
magic statue that
sang a kind of
some when the
sun shone on it.

The Divine

1.

The world
is enough of
a mystery

no inventions
necessary

maybe a
sort of
half-belief
in some general
force a supreme
malignancy
in operation
behind the
apparent
contingency
and chaos
of things.

2.

There was no one there

it was
like coming to
in the dark
of a battle-
field amid the

flying cannon-
smoke and
feeling around
for a limb
that had been
shot off.

3.

But beyond even that
there was something
more

it must be simple
but so immense

as immense
as air

so new it
is almost
something else

like an
astonishment
standing up
in the world.

The Statues

I have
always
found some-
thing moving
about these
sudden frozen
figures the
way they stand
so still among
the leaves

or off at
the end
of an
avenue

watching some-
thing that is
not us that
is beyond us
some endless
transfixing
spectacle only
they can see

Time for
them moves
as slowly
as mountains.

The City After The Snow Melted

1.

A very
large girl
on roller
blades skated
whizzed by

she grasped
grabbed the old
lady's purse snapped
the snap vanished
without a trickle
or a trace

the old lady stood
there watched for a
moment for an insight
or realization then opened
her mouth and started
screeching screaming it
was a high thin dry
wail without words

people walking by
moved a small step
further away in case the
lady was crazy in case it
was catching which it
usually was in this city
after the snow melted.

2.

It was spring
in the city there
was manic energy
turned loose an
energy that made
everyone bounce
away from each
other just a little
when they walked
or talked

even though it was
still too chilly too cold
for all the bad smells to
thaw out people were
starting to unbutton the
top buttons of their
coats as they all looked
with a special gleam
in their eyes for new
ways to hurt each other.

The Old Country

Everyone was
timid furtive
resentful as if
they might
shatter a
light bulb like
the sweaty gray-
faced man in
the heavy suit
or the skinny
girl from the shop

they glanced
at her with
weak beseeching
smiles they
carefully closed
the door behind
them as if they
might break
something

she had
thought she
had managed
to forget
all that

she thought
she had
banished it
all:

the simplicity
the completeness
had folds in them
and held her in
its chilly embrace.

The Life

We have been
searching for it
masking most
of our lives I
do not know
what to call
it how to describe
it no words suffice

There are people
who prowl the
world in search
of an ideal like
someone who
will indulge
their darkest
desires and
slake for them
the hot half-
formed urgings
of the blood

I've often
wanted that
except with
stillness not
inert not life-
less

but quiet
like a pale
pool in a
shaded glade.

The Girl

She imagined
herself dressed
in blue

sitting at a
little seafront
cafe

the hot wind
blowing
the palms
clattering

the gathered
people were
glancing at
her wondering
who she was
sitting demurely
in her light

squirming a
little in
tender pain

basking in
secret
in the slow
heat
of her hidden
bruises.



The Time

It is
especially
enigmatic
in experience
like pallid
ladies or the
inside of
quietude and
remoteness

something is
missing

something is
not being
said

This is the
power
this is
its delicacy

or the
very reticence
that lends
experience
its enormity

senses and
scenes seem
to hover to
the point of
vanishing

how clear
clean and
evanescent
it all is

as if seen by
someone dying
who lifts herself
up to a
window at
twilight to
look out a
last time at the
world she is
losing.

The Day

All is coolness
silence
outside the garden
all stands aghast in
a tangle of trumpeting
convolvulus

nothing happens
nothing will happen

yet all is poised
waiting like
crouching with
arms braced or
the coiled fronds
of a fern

this expectancy
without anxiety
is what holds it
all together

like a spring
tensed in mid-
air and sustained
by its own force
exerting equal
pressure everywhere.

Yesterday

The heat
of the day
shakes the
air above the
fire and makes
the trees on the
near side of the
clearing appear
to wobble

between the trunks
there is the sea deep-
blue unmoving flecked
with white like an
ancient statue permanent

huge russet shards
with threads of
yellow glimmer
hum and creak
through the banked
stones like lead
trembling within
itself

as a child
I wanted to
melt stones
too to have
the gold and
couldn't understand
it when they
didn't melt

now
I have
other chores:
like bringing
quiet silence
in to birth awhile.

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