

I

Down in the dell where the raspberries sprawl
and the deerflies, looking like bomber planes, hang
around the tumbled boulders from former walls
that wait an eternity for the next big bang.
—In that dell was a big black rock, breathing.

Then the rock began to move,
Its mouth full of chewed fruit,
Its mossy back a thicket of fur,
Its muzzle licked tawny brown,
Its belly a loaded hammock, swinging.
It was a she, rearing up on her haunches
raising her man arms high
and spreading her fingers wide.
She owned every beat of that hushed moment.

And every beat of the world in that moment
was the bear —and you and me watching.

II

Into the architecture of constant happening,
above the hum of one trillion lights,
and seven thousand restaurants,
across a sky of up and down heights
—crane arms and towers crank into huge ABC's.

Neglected names curl on underpass walls,
names of pretty products fill the nicer places.
Revolving glass and subways all chockablock,
and stink weed holding on in forgotten spaces.
—And that faraway bear, rising up to the tree...

III

It's a way to make your mark building things,
a sort of graffiti to knock things down.
Buildings sway on their concrete stems,
Bearing the battered beehives of this modern town
—and the altered lives of you and me.

From the bus I am taking to meet you I see
someone — you! —emerging in a multitude of motions:
up out of a taxi cab with bags, a pen in your fingers
bills held out, dollars taken, the whole urban quotient
—do you remember her?

her black claws leaving four lines of signature
as she swiped through half an inch of tree in a single go,
turning to reckon us through the green darkness.
Then we were left in her after-shimmer, alone
—by the brambles and the uneasy stones.