

DAVID JAFFIN

THE HALF
OF A CIRCLE

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For Mordecai Ardon

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THE HALF OF A CIRCLE

DISTANCE

You left me thinking

the night is not to
be touched

I walk the space be
tween you and now

listening to myself.

MID OCTOBER

The leaves have colored
for now, a touch

that told more than
it asked

The sun waits
behind whatever trees

it wants

Time condensed to this
single pause

the silence after rain
receiving itself

the folding of a page
within the intent

of hands.

EVENING'S LIGHT

Late October
pre evening closeness

a bird breaking sound
over water the

sun expecting to set

This artificial light
where I sit

a table
touches my hand.

The glass permeates
sound that I drink

in phrases to
the bottom of my

thirst.

PRE CONCEIVED

A poem has only one
place to be.

A light must be on
it doesn't have

the choice to think.

Outside the rain is

steps lead away
as prints in snow

I see in glass

my eyes
touch your hand

the room arranged
for this,

it needn't be
prepared .

CLOSING A WINDOW

You closed space
from the win

dow the room
edged nearer

dried leaves
blew shadows on

glass

flowers hushed in
their cold

the scent of clo
sing .

WHAT IT IS

for J. W.

It's the poise of
evening the til

ting of a hand
to distinguish

itself

the matter of course,
repetition of

things that be
come less precise :

the image of a
stone breaking the

water's hold
more than one cir

cle at a time —

these words,
even as I speak

and the way
you'll hear their

sounds.

MORE

If night could be
one star greater

my joy would
break .

TWO STORYIED

Winter, cold

your breath
hung in the air

warming itself —

There's a difference
in two storyied

houses,

they were made
to fit .

RECLINING NUDE

Her voice and
eyes the outer cir

cumstance
translated as light

or jewels
strung to that per-

fect sense.

FORMS/ EXTENSIONS

A basket of fruit

the smells ripen

thinking of
the curve of your

shoulder

a bird pruning
the air

eclipsing
it.

ANOTHER WAY TO SEE

You have another way
to see

a boy and his
gassed balloon mea

suring the sky

the sun exposes you.

SHARP

It's not as if
because of
considering that —

A wire must be bent.
Light comes.
Thoughts crack sharp.

SPACE

There's a space of
this page.

You can smell it
in the mountains

when the snow's
kept cold.

Here, I sit in
this room

between what I think
and where you are

there's a space

too .

FOR RAPHAEL

You came into the
world with a

memory

looking out of win-
dows wanting to

find what you'd
lost. You knew

before you knew
that you knew.

We don't.

THROUGH HIS HANDS

He would want to
sit with a book

in his hand

the shades would
be closed

night concealed
in its place

as he thought
passing through his

hands the flashed
image from the

train (trans
parent) to its

cause turning the
page, now and

then from one sound
to the next .

DEAD REALLY DEAD ?

You tell me
the dead are really

dead, it's final,
over. But each

summer I think him
so because with

out even thinking
I expect him

and he comes.
Nothing dies un

less we do.

ONLY WHEN THE RAIN IS HERE

What is it we know
only when the rain

is here ?

I remember the sea
was silent,

we were under the
last impression

of stars.

TONE

Music touches sound

the fingers that were
heard feeling to

their place
of the keys turned

to where the reflec-
tion of thought

is

I see you so,
distinct as if only the

light could be
this appearance of sound,

the key, and
where your fingers

touched.

CHANGES

It's your choice,
of words.

Whatever you say
changes it.

If you close a curtain
the room is darker

you touch yourself

the world is myth
if you think

it so.

THAW

It can't be seen.

The streaks of water
jet from ice

the sun's just as
cold as I thought

The afternoon
wears its same

shadows

only the air
immaterial presence

I breathe in its
softness, wait

for the mel
ting of touch .

THE HALF OF A CIRCLE

Because I look at
the vase for

three and a half

minutes its han-
dle's curved

a classical com-bine
god and fish

sceptered water
for a throne

it's even round
if you follow

it behind
the window and

can wait
without brea-

king your poise.

THAT WAY

Almost dark
a bird reaching for

song

(to describe
its flight,

its place
on the tree,

the tone)

I notice how the
night is, ab

sorbs.

We never come,
that way.

CAUSE

You say
the leaves blow in

late September.

I listen
to the waves

pulled up
from the surface

and wonder
if I could hear

your voice
when they do.

CROCUS

Flowers,
didn't even ask

I change the
month to spring

put on
a lighter coat.

OF

It's your way of

even trying to be
another way to

Do you think
the trees can breathe

without wind

just stop and wait.

TOWARDS A NATURAL VIEW
OF THEOLOGY

Like a fish
blowing its bubble

puckered its lips
and then let go

gazing to the surface
You can make sound

from glass

but he, he
doesn't try to

imagine what
he can — he

simply aims.

JUST ONCE

If I tell you
again it won't

be true. Just

once I bought
you orchids,

inbetween colors.

LESS

I am less now.
The clouds shift

but their shadows
don't cross

quite so,
not the same in

me. I listen
to what you say

become aware of
the shades of

your voice
which I knew, with

out seeing, before.

AT LEAST 4 TIMES

You can't tell
me when you come

in the house
and look in the

mirror at least
4 times,

fixing your hair —

I know
that you simply

want to find
out.

ESSENCE

The conformity of
fact synonym for

presence, event,
articulation of the

word to this sense,
wood stripped of its

bark (the fire's
wrath) .

LATE NOVEMBER

It's late into Nov
ember birds in

sist on their
shadows crossing o

ver sound
the winds won't

still the leaves
hang, tight as

they can

snap when they
break as a sud-

den light put
out to tell

me the print of
words you press

to your lips
tense at the edge

time's past,
it breaks in your

hands.

CONTRADICTION

If you have it
both ways

there's a knife
cut through the

middle.

SUSPENDED

The air
covered with snow

smoke extending it
self in time

a wire strung,
tight to two

points I think ex-
actly the same

place.

FICTIVE

After the rain

the trees were fic
tive

that's a word for
slender

perhaps because it
was March.

INTRODUCTION WITHOUT A FUGUE

It's only what I see.

You stepped in place

smiling as if
it should be so,

prepared.

I heard

but you forgot to
step, back.

KNEW

When I saw
I thought that you

knew.

The looking game's
not what runs

us together
the fingers con

necting pulse.

There was a
pause in your

face

a waiting to see

that I look
and knew.

COUNTED PLEASURES

The truth of a kiss,
lighted thoughts

tendernesses of touch
between hands, fin

gers or such,

the form of a world
but closed

disposed to the coun-
ted pleasures.

This mid- October still
decline of light

the receding slope from
the hill

wreathed flowers,
the scent that's kept

in stone.

THE WHOLE OF A CIRCLE

Sun describes the afternoon.

It draws a circle from
the sky

The arc of time
when it shines clearing

itself

The blue
and direction of

light.

HEALING THE BLIND

Water over stone

moving to time

the push of sound
and my lips

not wanting, words.

STUDY IN TONALITY

At first
a bird sang in

to the silence

morning's first
light appeared ;

the sun wa
vered as if bro

ken of its tone

became whole, again.

THAT WAY

If it could be
less, what I

see

stone lightened by
touch just

turned that way.

AS THIS

The shape
of the hill

coming down

the leaves
in spring, wind —

I take your hand
but we can't

be as
soft as this .

ABOUT THE SADNESS OF TIME

One would have wanted
a word then,

something about the
sadness of time

For winds brushed
through the leaves

and left us all un
quiet.

WHY

You asked, why
as if I

knew what
you wanted to

say a ques

tion between
your self.

LAKE

The water moves
I look in a cir

cle closing
the sides

sound begins here
over the surface

continuing what
I see.

In Nomine Domini

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