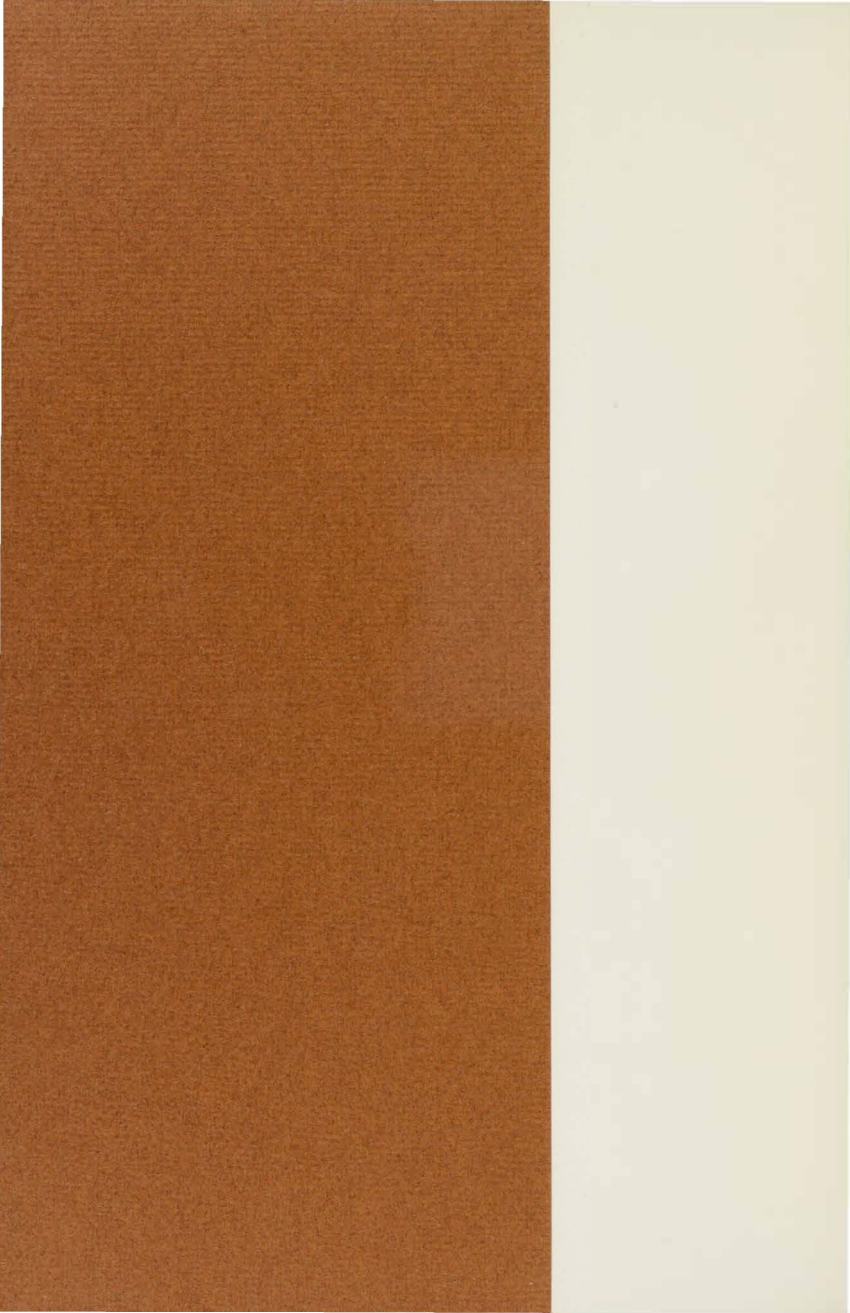


DAVID JAFFIN

AS ONE



AS ONE

DAVID JAFFIN

AS ONE



The Elizabeth Press
NEW ROCHELLE, N. Y.

Acknowledgments

Some of these poems first appeared in the following periodicals: CAVE (New Zealand), THE CLARE MARKET REVIEW (London School of Economics), CONTRASTS (England), CRAB GRASS (Northern Ireland), THE DECAL REVIEW (Wales), DESCANT, ELIZABETH, THE FREE LANCE, THE GALLERY SERIES POETS, GLOBAL TAPESTRY (England), HERE NOW (England), HIEROPHANT, LITTLE WORD MACHINE (England), NEW HEADLAND (England), OASIS (England), OPEN PLACES, ORBIS (England), POET (England), POETRY AND AUDIENCE (University of Leeds), THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND REVIEW, SAMPHIRE (England), SCRIP (England), WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON LITERARY MAGAZINE, THE WHEATSTONE, & WORKSHOP NEW POETRY (England).

LATE MARCH was published as a broadsheet by The Sceptre Press (England), © 1973 Sceptre Press.

as always for Rosemarie,
Raphael and Andreas

CONTENTS

AS ONE	11
TOUCH	12
THE ROSE	13
QUIET NOTE	14
SHELL	15
BUT THE ONE	16
BALLERINA	17
VERMEER	18
ANNUNCIATION	19
THE CUP	20
CHESS PIECES	21
TO DAPHNE	22
PRISONER	23
MANNEQUIN	24
BIRDS IN A CAGE	25
FRÄULEIN T.	26
A BELIEF (<i>of Nathaniel Pink</i>)	27
CLARA	28
IN LIGHT	29
SUNDAY: HIND LEGS	30
PASTURES	31
AND AT THE END	32
AT THE RIGHT MOMENT	33
SYMBOLS	34
TIME PIECE	35
AMERICANA (<i>Southern, 1880s</i>)	36
SIMILAR CONCLUSIONS	37

A HOUSE OF WINDOWS	38
OF THE SAME THINGS	39
HOUSE OF DEATH	40
OF HER, NOW	41
DISTINCT	42
LATE MARCH	43
ACCEPTED	44

AS ONE

AS ONE

The sound of
these words

the image and
sense are one

if the reflec-
tion of I

in the waters
in the late

afternoon
is the same.

TOUCH

When I touch this lamp
I pull the stars down

it closes light
simply the touch my fingers

tell its thoughts
your face imprinted to

this sound
for the lines break a

night of separate stars
you think what I touch

and the dark
glimmers its light through

us.

THE ROSE

The rose is
that rose to
me: stilled

petals, soft
repose (but
complete)

to the fic-
tions of
touch, primed

(considered),
refined—
the mind

wanders as
the hand,
delicate

breaks.

QUIET NOTE

Autumn has
a quiet note
as well

the way the
birds turn to
the wind

that their co-
lor is known.

SHELL

I touched at its wings
when the tides were
in

and I was sad before
the waves rose to
their height

and I could not hear
my sadness.

BUT THE ONE

You told me
two truths

but the one
(your eyes)

transitional.

BALLERINA

The world was balanced on a
single toe.

The dance was over,
we'd all applauded

the curtain fell
but she didn't move.

We shuffled from our place
the lights went on

that curtain fell again
but she didn't move.

Her eyes, her thoughts
and all she ever was

suspended from a sin-
gle toe.

VERMEER

She wouldn't look
to where we wanted her face
to be
didn't quite come to
focus

but kept turning away,
touching aside
to the tangible objects of
that place

shy in a way
but we knew her then
as he turned that light
in

that she touched, as
of herself
each feature with those self-
enclosed fingers.

ANNUNCIATION

Its shadow
(was it taken
as light)

broken and still
for a moment
defined the wind—

It was spring
(its coming)

That afternoon
clear and known;

She saw the sta-
tues touched,
a sun grazed

their heart,
distinct now.

THE CUP

The cup was
shared and
clean, de-

cipherable
(too) for
the present

want; as it
touched his
lips the

lights suc-
cessively di-
minished as

a flame put
out with co-
vered hands;

he drank,
but his thirst
was dry.

CHESS PIECES

Time's exact,
the clean
spaces be-

tween, po-
lished to the
phrase, carved

and rarified—
Touch would
gleam as

touch, the
eye confined
as glass

refine its
chosen pre-
sence.

TO DAPHNE

My mind's cold
the leaves are conscious
formed

your face refrains
from thought;

My mind's the cold and
conscious act
the leaves are glistened,
gold

your face withholds the
outline of its
form.

PRISONER

His loneliness
pained him but

once

when he passed by a
mirrored wall

regrettable (in-
deed)

his face reflec-
ted

scarcely there.

MANNEQUIN

Her dress spec-
ially fit,

tailored to fine
phrases,

the scent attri-
butable

(if spurious)
as of fingers on

cloth curled and
consumed these

strictures of
fact.

BIRDS IN A CAGE

One doesn't like being closed
in like that
to such a shortness of space
and with wings that couldn't
fly,
provided they were taught
to flutter harmlessly
by,
looking pretty, perhaps,
but performing less;

And one tires of gold, too
tarnished at that
that need be cleaned from
time to time
and of looking at oneself
(two faces)
in the mirror re-
volving
or looking out at what's
looking in.

FRÄULEIN T.

A bird flew in her room
one day,

She wouldn't believe it
though

ran for her colored bird
book
found the proper wings

as she was looking
the bird flew away

She wouldn't believe it
though

sat long with her book by
the window.

A BELIEF
(of Nathaniel Pink)

My life is predicated
on the belief

that birds fly westwards
in the afternoon,
in the late afternoon

and leave shadows behind,
gather silences
stretched out their wings

I feel a purpose in that,
something for me to

believe I at the centre
of things (as they
pass overhead)

Unobserved I stand
anticipate the start the
flourish of wings,

feel the expanse of
sky (I at the centre
of things)

marking out that place
at angles to myself,
leaving shadows

behind, gathering si-
lences there.

CLARA

She was made
of the things
she took with

her fingers
according to season
and want,

berry and branch,
the bloodless
thorn that ran

straight to her
veins.

IN LIGHT

A bird uncovered sound,
prepared its wing

shadows kept close to the
leaves
the sun slate

its heart written straight
across the claws
signed them all,

in light.

SUNDAY: HIND LEGS

Sunday:
birds sprint among the
branches

upsetting the winter
stillness

a dog sits in
snow,
hind legs the pillars of
his house

times are made that
way:

permanent scene
sudden thought
the arch of sound

constructing a position to
watch from.

PASTURES

He was like a horse
in a meadow without a fence.

Someone had put him there
he couldn't remember anymore
about those workings
the early romplings the
seasoned markings pressed to
his side, ingrained for
more than enough years

He was like a horse
in a meadow without a fence
looking for water
and a hand that could close
him in

He reared fast to the side,
saddle and stirrups a-
libied
domestic stillness

He wouldn't come,
the years had passed
the pasture cropped with his
takings and I wouldn't
build a fence there
even if he told me to.

AND AT THE END

And at the end you'll
ask,
as you've always done,
but then I won't
answer—

Will you remember, that?

I'll simply stare,
set still as a face of
stone,

And if you ask again,
a little louder
your face concealing
concern

I won't answer ei-
ther—
please, don't expect
that of me.

AT THE RIGHT MOMENT

He came at the right moment
for the room was empty.

He closed it quickly behind
concealing himself there.

He turned the key,
he covered the windows with
shadow.

He took his shoes
and the sounds of his thoughts,
off.

He removed himself from that moment
softly aside

He stood where nothing could
have been.

SYMBOLS

You always agreed
(either to what I
said or the ar-

guments opposed),
Assumed, accepted
satisfactions be-

tween us
Time stayed still,
a cat curled with-

out will of its
own;

but I've grown into that
symbol of his-self,

at my feet
(long since asleep)

the cat.

TIME PIECE

And the day after yester
day

When you put this apple
in my hand

and compared it
(metaphorically speaking)

to the rose

All the world's round
after all

William Tell couldn't have cared
less

and Eve hadn't been named to
the board of directors

yet

Sin has its price too
I suppose

all the leaves come down
whether you like it or

not

I found this apple
on the road

just rotting away by it
self.

AMERICANA

(Southern, 1880s) for my nephews

On a long summer
day when shadows leaned their
width full length against

some other to be
described, inopportune
structure inappro-

priately referred to as

a fence,

when birds scrawny
eyed looked like straw hats
tipped too far afront

and one wore bluejeans
brass buttons/
comic cobbled pipe

between one's molared lips

proud of it all,
increasingly aware of

that aforementioned.

SIMILAR CONCLUSIONS

A radio isn't
 a room

even if we've gathered about
 the same thing

and windows could look the
 other way out

 not back
stairs don't lead to

 similar conclusions

unless we've taken the wrong
 way out com
 pared

to that assumption
a chimney with
 out smoke's

a radio with
 out a room

to listen in.

A HOUSE OF WINDOWS

That house was simply windows

it looked out at me
as persons without names.

It was stone and I thought
it so

it had a gate and I couldn't
enter.

Birds sang, however bright, there
through shadow

one passed it by
even when the lights were
on

and one could feel one's
steps, withdraw.

It was a house of windows
simply windows

looking out.

OF THE SAME THINGS

And you didn't look when I
came in the room

It was raining outside

the door closed behind
and we sat at the same table,

the room itself was shadow,
sound and object

with a light in the middle
and windows at the sides.

You didn't look when I came
in the room,

when I took my hat
in my hands

when I closed my coat on
the chair

when I sat as any other object
in that room

It was raining outside

and we could hear the sounds
of the same things.

HOUSE OF DEATH

She was cold when
we came

Hands stiffened ex-
tended upwards

wouldn't remain in
their place,

Face swollen still
that room alive
and active

wanting silence with-
out her.

OF HER, NOW

And what do we have of
her, now:

Those pieces we can't seem
to place, just right as
they were;

Smiles of that livened face
that yellow at the
sides;

A house that's provided for
others,
long since repainted

A memory, a meaning here
or there
as the touch of free-
flowing hair

and a stone they've carved
out since,
quite clearly.

DISTINCT

The clock was turning sound

leaves stood in the late af-
ternoon

by the window
your flesh muted in
light

I saw your face
looking through itself

(the circles of sound)

A silence that could
be touched

in this room
a shadow crossed

birds held in flight

as your hands thought,
felt the edge of cloth

The clock ticked a
sound

that the darkness was
distinct.

LATE MARCH

Late in March
there was a windstill on
the lake

the sky mirrored itself
and we walked the winds
our way

Three boys stood at the bridge
trying the water with their
line

though the land was want
of growth
and their fingers kept

with cold
the touch of the dead,
this last of winter

They gazed within the
water
searching for light

Swans moved along the
surface
floating on sound

the clouds closed with-
in themselves

Late in March,
This windstill on the
lake.

ACCEPTED

He grew old in the afternoon,
shadows became of him.

He could have sat with a book
in his hand,
closing the corners between them.

He could have talked outloud
if he wanted
as one talks to a child
thinking oneself increasingly smaller

or he could have cleaned
and cleared away
all that unevenness others referred
to as himself

but instead he grew old in the
afternoon,
shadows became of him.

This edition of AS ONE
designed by Martino Mardersteig is limited to
400 copies printed from Dante type on Magnani
rag paper by Stamperia Valdonega

VERONA MCMLXXV



