

DAVID JAFFIN

THE HALF  
OF A CIRCLE











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The Elizabeth Press  
NEW ROCHELLE, N. Y.

## Acknowledgments

Some of these poems first appeared in the following periodicals: THE ANTIGONISH REVIEW (Canada), ARIEL (Canada), CONFRONTATION, COTTONWOOD REVIEW, EUREKA (Sweden), FOR NOW, GALLERY (England), LITTACK (England), LITTLE WORD MACHINE (England), OMENS (England), NEW POETRY (England), PALANTIR (England), ST. ANDREWS REVIEW, SAMPHIRE (England), and THE WINDLESS ORCHARD.

OF was published as a broadsheet by The Sceptre Press, England, 1974, and CHANGES was published as a broadsheet by Words Press, England, 1975.

*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*



This edition of THE HALF OF A CIRCLE  
designed by Martino Mardersteig is limited  
to 400 copies printed from Centaur type on  
Magnani rag paper by Stamperia Valdonega

VERONA MCMLXXVII















