

Three Poems by Charles Renning

Departure

All cries from the fire softly sifted,
the silver of speech dissolved in smoke:
then let my ashes wash with waves,
on the ocean's tides departing, turn, then.
Adrift, I will not need a name
to visit places where I've never been,
now, rise with spray, the dolphin's leap,
can run the sands on Tonga's isle.
I will do fine enough and free---
Having no claim to earth or time,
I am sailor again on ocean's breast,
no longer to count on capital accumulation,
no more a drudge to market share.

October

Their faces wreathed in amiable remembrance,
it's often I'll wonder if they're still alive---
even, here, as we, unseasonably, together, walk,
find this that moment in autumn when
it is most knowing of itself, of ourselves aware
of how Octobers pile on one another,
each jaded leaf bearing the weight
of all. Wise with one's own time,
reading the petals of the frost-bit rose,
we'll see how graveyards will soon turn to weeds,
and how much less of Providence remains unspent.
New generations will be pleased the same
that anything's survived', will make love and dance
amid the ruins where we left our names.

On Call

On these boards, this bench, my practice,
more goods to measure, cut, and sew,
more seats to service till I hear
the call. Some longing from the womb
of earth will draw the hunter forth
thru leaf and field or snowy slope
to track fresh quarry to its day---
as not in vain, but to share
at bounty's hearth what chance may be.
Surrounded by the clear cold breath of caves,
the dreamer then and the dreamer now
must celebrate all wounds as harvest too,
while shadows prey on rocks and sleep,
to brush new fire on the walls.

-Charles Renning