

THE LESSON
(for Elizabeth Drew, in memory of her poetry seminars, 1958-1959)

Eagle-eyed Mnemosyne, mother sweet and fierce, look down on things long gone and brood upon the mountains, stoop

Like hawks of home to folded hill where ice-carved tam gives back the lidless stare of moon, and tower

In time of youth; lean over sorry farm, cradle dark and sour of silence, and pass on;

Zoning ever lower, drop in decades ringed with years, and turn

Along the howling vortex where I hear a storm of souls,

Blood of elemental forebears, roar and

Emb; stand still at door.

The lady white and small in swirls of chair

Holds my hooded heart enchanted on her ungloved hand; she

Dreams aloud in that bright house, set in ordered garden, speaks of

Rush of rhythmic wings that beat in time with universal song of man and planets; she

Extends her fragile arm; I climb the painted air, clothed with hills and all the rivers in my veins;

Widening through realms of gold, I ride the Empyrean crowned with stars, dreaming other worlds beyond the rim.