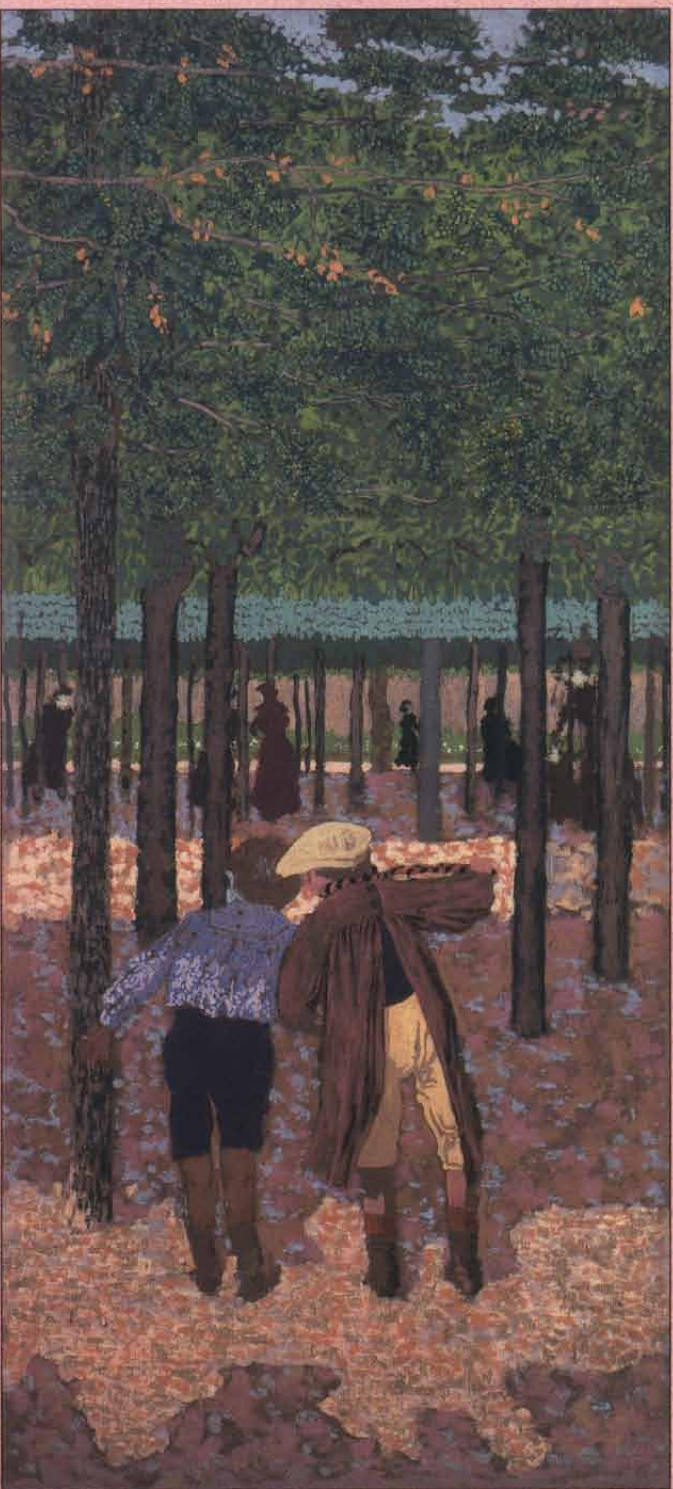


PENNYWEIGHT WINDOWS

New & Selected Poems

DONALD REVELL



Survey

I am so lonely for the twentieth century,
for the deeply felt, obscene graffiti
of armed men and the beautiful bridges
that make them so small and carry them
into the hearts of cities written like words
across nothing, the dense void
history became in my beautiful century.
When a man talks reason, he postpones something.
He gets in the way of a machine that knows him
for the sad vengeance he is, somewhere close
to the bald name of his city. "New York"
means "strike back." "Attica" means "strike back"
and so does anyplace in the world
in the huge eyes and tender hands of my century.

I went to the capital. I had a banner,
and there were thousands of people like me.
There was an airplane, and for a moment
heavy with laurel and sprays of peach blossom
something that had never happened before
stretched like a woman's shadow on a hedge
between the plane and the people who saw it flying.
It was the real name of the century.
It told everyone to strike back
until there was no reason in the world
except a machine stalled overhead
that knows everyone and is as delicate
as peach blossom. But the poor years come too late.

July 4th Blue Diamond

It is impossible
Not to suffer agonies
Of attachment the world
Is really so wonderful
The mountain stain
Of the grass deepens
The solo trumpeter
His anthem ended
Falls forward weeping
Into a woman's arms
The notes are eternal
Many stars shine down
Through the roman candles
More brightly because of his tears

My Mojave

Sha-
Dow,
As of
A meteor
At mid-
Day: it goes
From there.

A perfect circle falls
Onto white imperfections.
(Consider the black road,
How it seems white the entire
Length of a sunshine day.)

Or I could say
Shadows and mirage
Compensate the world,
Completing its changes with no change.

In the morning after a storm,
We used brooms. Out front,
There was broken glass to collect.
In the backyard, the sand
Was covered with transparent wings.
The insects could not use them in the wind
And so abandoned them. Why
Hadn't the wings scattered? Why
Did they lie so stilly where they'd dropped?
It can only be the wind passed through them.

Jealous lover,
Your desire
Passes the same way.

And jealous earth,
There is a shadow you cannot keep
To yourself alone.

At midday,
My soul wants only to go
The black road which is the white road.
I'm not needed
Like wings in a storm,
And God is the storm.

Vietnam Epic Treatment

It doesn't matter
A damn what's playing—
In the dead of winter
You go, days of 1978 –
79, and we went
Because the soldiers were beautiful
And doomed as Asian jungles
Kept afire Christ-like
In the hopeless war
I did not go to in the end
Because it ended.

The 20th century?
It was a war
Between peasants on the one side,
Hallucinations on the other.
A peasant is a fire that burns
But is not consumed.
His movie never ends.
It will be beautiful
Every winter of our lives, my love,
As Christ crushes fire into his wounds
And the wounds are a jungle.
Equally, no matter when their movies end,
Hallucinations destroy the destroyers.
That's all.
There has never been a President of the United States.

And the 21st century?
Hallucination vs. hallucination
In cold battle, in dubious battle,
No battle at all because the peasants
Have gone away far
Into the lost traveler's dream,
Into a passage from Homer,
A woodcutter's hillside
Peacetime superstition movie.

On a cold night, Hector.
On a cold night, Achilles.
Around the savage and the maniac
The woodcutter draws a ring of fire.
It burns all winter long.
He never tires of it
And for good reason:
Every face of the flames is doomed and beautiful;
Every spark that shoots out into the freezing air
Is God's truth
Given us all over again
In the bitter weather of men's
Hallucinations. There has never been
A President of the United States.
There has never been a just war.
There has never been any life
Beyond this circle of firelight
Until now if now is no dream but an Asia.

Zion

Suddenly copper roses glow on the deadwood.
I am these because I see them and also see
Abolition, the white smock on a girl
Eating an apple, looking down into
The valley, a small train steaming there.
I go to the uplands to join death,
And death welcomes me, shows me a trailhead,
Foot-tracks overfilled with standing water.
Man has never owned another man here.
Aglow in the shade hang apples free for the taking.
I'm saying that death is a little girl. The apple
There in her hand is God Almighty where the skin
Breaks to her teeth and spills my freedom all over
Sunlight turning deadwood copper rose.

Landscape with Tityrus in Vermont

Is the shearing done?
Was it done well?
I remember the hillsides
As being real
Workplaces for gathering wool
From off the weeds.

Exactly the same are beautiful
Waitresses lounging in their dignity
For want of trade in terrible
Chinese restaurants.
I mean beauty
Is a discard of our too-late labor now.

So lately, many have settled in the remote places,
Umbria or Vermont or any place
The blankets tear at our skin
Because the wool is coarse and the news,
When it reaches us, reaches us, then
Starves at the doorstep.

War starves.
Word of corruption
Starves, and even
Things near to the heart—
My old dog dead
And burned and in a box
Beside my unopened mail—
Starve.

On the hillsides over there
In the wooly November snow,
Cow mounts cow, ewe mounts ewe.
News of the American empire
Blows into drifts against broken fences.

Io, I remember,
Was a cow,
And her father a river.
Corruption in Heaven
Made such hap.

If Andrew Marvell had had a typewriter,
If Wm Blake had had a cassette recorder,
If Walt Whitman had had a brace of healthy sons,
How the hillsides over there would melt and shine!

Nevertheless today an exceptional pine tree
Even in November
Did actually burst into berry-red root and branch.
Unprecedented things
Are massing at the edge of eyesight.
Their technology
Makes holiday and fresh hills
And strong new fires for new gathering.