







## SIX POEMS



*Charles Wright*

ARS POETICA II

I find, after all these years, I am a believer—  
I believe what the thunder and lightening have to say;  
I believe that dreams are real,  
                    and that death has two reprisals;  
I believe that dead leaves and black water fill my heart

I shall die like a cloud, beautiful, white, full of nothingness.

The night sky is an ideogram,  
a code card punched with holes.  
It thinks it's the word of what's to come.  
It thinks this, but it's only The Library of Last Resort,  
The reflected light of The Great Misunderstanding.

God is the fire my feet are held to.

WHAT DO YOU WRITE ABOUT, WHERE DO YOUR IDEAS COME FROM?

Landscape, of course, the idea of God and language  
Itself, that pure grace  
                    which is invisible and sure and clear,  
Fall equinox two hours old,  
Pine cones dangling and doomed over peach tree and privet,  
Clouds bulbous and buzzard-traced.  
The Big Empty is also a subject of some note,  
Dark dark and never again,  
The missing word and there you have it,  
                    heart and heart beat,  
Never again and never again,  
Backdrop of back yard and earth and sky





Trees reshape themselves, the swallows disappear, lawn sprinklers  
do the wave.

Nevertheless, it's still summer: cicadas pump their boxes,  
Jack Russell terriers, as they say, start barking their heads off,  
And someone, somewhere, is putting his first foot, then the  
second,  
Down on the other side,  
no hand to help him, no tongue to wedge the weal.

LANDSCAPE AS METAPHOR, LANDSCAPE AS FATE AND  
A HAPPY LIFE

August. Montana. The black notebook open again.  
Across the blue-veined, dune-flattened, intimate blank of the page,  
An almost-unseeable winged insect has set forth  
On foot.  
I think I'll watch his white trail.

—To set one's mind on the ink-line, to set one's heart on the dark  
Unknowable, is far and forlorn, wouldn't you say?

Up here, our lives continue to lift off like leaf spores in the  
noon-wash,  
Spruce trees and young hemlocks stand guard like Egyptian dogs  
At the mouth of the meadow,  
Butterflies flock like angels,  
and God knees our necks to the ground.

—Nevertheless, the stars at midnight blow in the wind like high  
cotton.  
There is no place in the world they don't approach and pass over.

Wind lull, midmorning, tonight's sky  
light-shielded, monkish and grand  
Behind the glare's iconostasis, yellow poppies  
Like lip prints against the log wall, the dead sister's lunar words  
Like lip prints against it, this is as far as it goes...

—The sun doesn't shine on the same dog's back every day.  
Only you, Fragrant One, are worthy to judge us and move on.