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## Mutations

Robert Meredith

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## MUTATIONS

Out of the womb of night's repose —  
through the white-thighed dawn —  
the cock-clarion crew him clear  
on trebles of silver sound:  
blew him beyond his father  
and well-laid plans for plowing and planting,  
beyond the subdued circle of his mother  
at work in the kitchen described:  
into a world of spring  
where the waking eye of the East  
winked aflame.

Morning sped him through the meadow  
swift as fleeting dew,  
sunrise drew him high in an old oak,  
gnarled navel of the round-bellied sky.  
Small as he was, he was  
as tall as the oak he extended, extended  
his heart's range as wide  
as April's embryonic love unbended, unbended  
over the hills and far away.

Surveying fields of faery,  
he reached into a tilted pasture  
aslant Tehuacana Hill  
and held a distance-dwarfed bois d'arc  
in a near-giant hand.

Opened out and in in turn  
a world of wonder,  
O orotund world,  
strengthening against all aging attempts  
to fix it at a safe middle distance  
not too near and not too far.

He caught the earthy rhythm,  
a variable world made constant  
by change miraculous,

saw immediacy in magnified patterns  
of rough-grained bark,  
vision in folded fields  
and imagined valleys,  
in folded fields and far away.

ROBERT MEREDITH

*WHICH DOOR? WHICH DOOR?*

Here every bottle cries O drink me quickly;  
The leaves are shaped like arrow points, the eye  
Befurred with drugs looks around only thickly;  
The Rabbit mutters it is time to die.

Innocent Alice in this queasy mirror  
Displays the breastworks of a Minoan jade;  
Everything one can hear will mock the hearer,  
Everything one can make will be unmade.

The Rabbit mutters and the night arises;  
It must have been the wrong hole after all,  
Certainly this one holds no nice surprises,  
Only the consequences of the fall.

WILLIAM DICKEY

PATRIMONY

The statuesque people were shrilling bright —  
Hard as the rock in a mountain head.  
This was the valley of whirling knives.  
Here was the stone for the chisel bred.  
Now like the gods we would blaze in our lives,  
And splinter the gloom by the idols shed.

The foe led a beast with a bellowing mouth.  
The sting of its blackness was mist on the bone.  
But we grappled at noonside the thick web of dark,  
Till the gold of our fire in bare heaven shone.  
Then centuries circled the eagle's mark,  
And the statuesque people were changed to stone.