

# PROJECT PAPERS

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## I MISSED PUNK

I missed Punk  
because my record player was broken  
because I was suddenly older  
because I can stand only so much distraction  
only so much excitement and elation  
but mainly because my record player was broken  
and none of my friends cared much about new music

(Back in the '60s the thought that I'd missed something  
would depress me terribly  
Now it's just one of those things that happen)

Who are we anyway  
any of us  
who care about new music or anything?  
We are the ones who care about their own skins, certainly  
about saving them  
and not being totally crazy and alone, in pain  
We will go through a lot of incidental pain  
as long as it keeps us in company  
even ridiculous company, as most company is  
We certainly don't want to be alone  
and this makes us ridiculous

What I want to be is virtuous and noticed  
What good is virtue if no one notices?  
You don't know it's virtuous unless someone says so

I missed Punk  
But it brushed past me in the cultural bazaar  
and seemed to drop a hint about virtue  
being what I'd always thought:  
a readiness to lose, to let go  
because only in loss is one not ridiculous

(if anyone notices)

Never resist an idea  
Never say no to a contradiction  
They have come to help you  
smash the ego  
which always reconstitutes  
(and if it doesn't, well,  
your worries are over)

ANN LAUTERBACH

### RUSHED COURSE

Now timed, juxtaposed, a season  
Leaning on its thesis, its jar  
Of garments saved. I stay, you  
Leave me to dress accordingly  
Drenched in curves and curves, a  
Warrant. Our antecedents are seeds

Blackened, swept into descending arcs  
Whose rhythms are abiding and whose sloop  
Was burned also in the necessity of winter.  
To be brave is to cut anchor, be adrift  
In the consulting fire, warm  
With other ruins, as yet to be assigned.

By this forum I attain you, almost.  
Such agility is strategic, a little plot  
Against amplitude, from which blood  
Is drawn, poison found too late.  
The careless foreshadows;  
Mind shrinks into matter, disappointing

Our most vehement fans. Swallow your sin,  
Says the maiden, it will not harm  
Unless you wake into the numb hospitality  
Of the speaking screen. If you're hungry eat,  
If sad, cry against the hunger on the street  
And the musician's repetitious chord,

His adagio of surfeit, his open purse.  
You were not born to nurse receding light  
Back into day. Look, the tracks are lit  
Like crowns on heads of architects  
Who labor to bring Venice to our shores  
Promising formal leisure for our plight.

Veil yourself, turn into the romance  
Dazed, reversed, as on a hill of new desire,  
To see down further than light will go  
Into the other, mocking, maimed,  
Rocking in her final sleep  
You cannot gain, or comfort, or undo.

### TO BE SELF-EVIDENT

Not even a trial, avenge  
Intimacy, a pillar of smoke  
Gaps, lulls  
Try translating the gun into color  
Abstract trinkets, fresh laws sealed  
In Vermont, in July  
Another yield after a search  
The view, the guest  
A glance into fibers, twins, wreaths  
Misguided, the heat's entry  
Inscribed or stolen?  
I like this better, don't you?  
Almost reversed  
I have no wish to  
The circle of stones  
Is that the gun?  
Against the veneer  
Witness  
So far, I had halted as you had run  
The door's adornment

## BRIGHT IDEAL

I thought: I will move to another station,  
One where the lessons are yet to be learned,  
Where the food is newly assembled  
And is served at first chill  
By happy girls.

I thought:  
This lush, bucolic air is dangerous  
Because inexhaustible, like the genius of an age.  
It, too, is a pattern of mind  
Stamped on the trees  
With a vivid, archaic tool  
And on the stones  
Compressed with cloudy outlines, untitled,  
Severed by night. I will plant a garden  
In recognition: verbena, and rosemary.

But what is it, lingering in the frame  
Of the gladly, wetly permissive  
Which finds its way out of the immersion  
Into the enlarged air, so that we  
Are at a loss for words?  
The new minister will not speak  
To the ladies of the choir about their sick cats,  
Their color schemes, their sleepless nights.  
He will turn toward evening  
To watch the kingfisher explode the lake  
Just as the sky has fully descended into it,  
A captured peel, like the cloth of his adherence.