

CHRISTOPHER HOWELL

Marsh

for Ray Amorosi

Friend, I hear in your letters
a fine whiteness. Something like
a window sighing
for the plaited sleeve so
momentary now one might think
all companions folded
like doves in the apple grove.
Surely, all night absence burns
coolly described and wanting
just as all day the giant whispers
to his rings and I want to say so
much. Yet
we are the sky and the flight
of something like the arrow's hunger.
Are those lamps we hold as we dream
again of rain's bright shingle
dancing? Is it true
lives leave us like sparrows?
I am master only of these
questions and their branches
and I think you are so near
the stone in me floats and gives itself
a name to place in your pocket as you walk
beside the sea.
Do we deserve ourselves, I wonder.
Wind in the marsh grass, frost on the nest
of a crow, the loneliness of hills, everything
bewilders and blesses us.