

Lewis Ellingham /
from THE WOUNDED LAUREL
(FOR LORNE SALUTIN)

The garden crosses two ideas, an axis
to ever more shaded light, in the ecliptic of the sun, and the
winter moon being always. The bar is an arrow . . . the bow and
this is rarely seen. Only in the mountains, and at sea, has the
critical pattern of the Scorpion, allowed me to grasp what is
essential, that the red of Antares, the principal star, is mask
for what too is eccentric, the jewel of the tail,

Thus the garden from above. But my vision has been
limited — the angle of significance could only be my eye,
never above directly, but from where I stand. My choice has
been to steal contact with what then becomes awkwardly obvious,
the pattern of the brick, as if the soul returned outside the
eye.

To spray the garden, the deep lavender toward dawn,
crystal the water, the slight movement of the air,

Then becomes choice.

FROM BOOK V

Somehow I seemed to see it, my memory poor,
Philadelphia, my request, for a north or west station
that would carry me, it must be by train, not bus
nor automobile, nothing *now*, and I remembered that
30th St. Sta. moves toward New York; and West
Philadelphia the University; Fr. Divine's heavens;
an elevated train-track then in course of demolition,
to go underground as a subway; but it was not this
at all, I wanted to go to Valley Forge, to catch,
to hitchhike the Turnpike, to go then, and I cannot
remember, east or west, Chicago, California, maybe
New York, east or west but somehow a green, eastern
Pennsylvania, a memory of snow, or grey rain, a
conservatism —

I had come from New York;

I had seen the bridge at Trenton;

the Delaware to my left;

thought of the Englishness of Princeton, the
bitterness of industrial America through New Jersey,
New Brunswick, Elizabeth my right, the hopeless ocean
to my imaginary —

what on earth,

and I was alone, a street, each fine house,
wall to wall, quiet, night, I wanted to know why
this perfect brick square, ample, brick, silent,
but not where I wished to . . . to be resourceful,
I walked uphill, a slight incline, angular, stately
streets, each mansion, urban, private, singular
despite compactness, a few blocks up, a few over,
then an even larger square, identical but

a vast church
of no denomination,
the nave replete
with singers, the
clerestories night-
reflecting each blue
and leaded red of
no light sensation
of music, only
a memorized privacy
in huge architectural space . . .

I returned to the square, walked, and a London-kind
of cab-conveyance stopped, a few blocks away by this
time, the driver said,

Where are you going?

and I said, "To the station, north and westward. I'm not sure." There were people in the vehicle, I never met them. Each was curious, well dressed. I said, "Just a minute, would you? I need a cigarette, and I'm sure that shop is the only one open at this hour." The driver said, "Yes, I'm sure that's so. It's late. Do you want a cigarette now?" I thanked him. I took one. I entered the shop. I returned, secure with my pack of cigarettes. I re-entered the car. It might have been only a speeding skeleton. For we passed through a great broken field of columns, brick the terrace, but endless as Egypt or Rome, the moon throwing long impressions of a fantastic plan in silence, the tires bounced, a forum, as held air, northerly, as

the thought of Pennsylvania
seemed dark.