

New England Love

or *A Gift Of Silences*

The sharp day declines
like the shadow of a sundial
or a saint in profile.

Three oranges
on a plate
in winter
sunlight.

The fruit is chilly and tart;
the guest
his grained hand
on the table
waits.

(What is essential in the soul
is all in the stillness of the face.)



A month ago
it was so cold
in the south
the fruit trees froze;

farmers burned tires
beside the frozen trees
in small bright fires
to keep the fruit alive:

they called in ten thousand
West Indians
to harvest the crops
before all was lost

(Continued on page 2)

(and under the Northern night
cold carved like milk
roofs houses earth and trees.)



Like a chessboard
the light laid out
in which we turned
with motions of the dance
(you, the guest, and I.)

The fruit survived the cold
to come to a colder
clime.

The heart survived its silences.

And we survived the blinding
white
match of afternoon across a table
with a dancer's definition
and his grace
(when tenderness burned like a matchflame on a face.)

You may have thought I was unaware of your sorrow
but I was aware of little else.
(Agonized for words the spirit fails
words)
. . . the wonder is that I should have seen
the fruit at all: how at the last the sun
touched the still globes of orange incarnadine.
It is the love within the silence tells
all.