Good evening Ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the third year of the SMTI [Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute, now University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth] Humanities Series. We're delighted to see you all here this evening. We believe that this year, the Humanities Series, like so many things at SMTI is growing both bigger and better. I want, if I may for a moment, as president for the Institute, to give particular thanks on behalf of the Board of Trustees, my colleagues on the faculty and administration, and the students of SMTI, to this wonderful town of Dartmouth and to its citizens for their generosity in allowing us to use this fine facility here at Dartmouth High. We only hope in the years ahead that we'll be able to demonstrate that we're good neighbors through reciprocity.

I want in particular to thank all of the members of the Dartmouth School Committee who have been so good to us over these few years we've offered the Humanities Series. I want to thank Superintendent Moody and Mr. Erickson, the Principal of the high school. And through them, the professional staff and all the others who work for the town in the school department, who've helped us so often and in so many ways to bring this program, particularly to the students and faculty of SMTI, but also and gladly to all of the citizens of southeastern Massachusetts who have so long waited for this kind of program to be offered to them.

Are you hearing me in back? Well, if you're not, then you've missed one of the greatest speeches I've ever made. [audience laughter and clapping] However, I shan't repeat it. I want, if I may also and without encroaching at all on our honored guest's time, to name the members of the SMTI faculty and administration who have served, some of them for as long as three years, on what is now called our Cultural Enrichment Committee and which is the committee which among other events sponsors the Humanities series. Professors Arury, Taft?, Chondy, Colbert, Dias?, Mehra, Ticody, and Woo. Joined by Dean Meade and Dean Stone and the Chairman of this committee, Professor Silva.

I think it was some three years ago, a little more than that, I went to some of these men who are and perhaps you'll recognize the veterans on the list, I went to some of them and said, "I should like to see SMTI sponsor very early," and by very early I meant the fall of 1963, "I should like to see SMTI sponsor a Humanities Series that would bring to this area of the commonwealth, so long deprived of the challenges to the intellect in it, an opportunity to hear from truly great persons in Political Science, Economics, Humanities in general, the Performing Arts.

We ought to be able to bring creative talent here under the sponsorship of a legitimate institution of higher learning and offer it primarily to our students and our colleagues within the academic community, but also to all of the people of Southeastern Massachusetts who might wish to come, participate, and learn.

Professor Silva was the first one to accept this challenge and he accepted the chairmanship of this committee. He worked very hard the first year and started it off, started it off quite solidly. We had a success, which frankly surprised most of us, including me, for the short period of time and the almost nonexistent funds that small group had to work with. I think the committee was very fortunate that to its ranks, somewhat more than a year ago, came Professor Mehra, who

was a real eager beaver in the full sense of the word. And he said, "Let me recruit. Let me go out and get the people we're talking about. Let me work at it." And he did. And that committee has worked so successfully in so short a period of time that I would dare say that 90% or more of the colleges and universities in these United States this year would swap their humanities offerings for what we at SMTI have. That's saying a lot, but if I were a gambling man, I'd bet on it.

The committee has done an outstanding job, through all of the intricacies of finance, and arrangements, and programs. But I think it's certainly fitting that I introduce to you this evening a gentleman who has played unquestionably a key and a crown role in making not only last year's but this year's program look so promising and so intellectually so appetizing. I present to you, ladies and gentlemen, Professor Mehra of the SMTI Department of Physics. Jay.

Jagdish Mehra -- Ladies and gentlemen, perhaps the greatest creation of the human mind are music, mathematics, and poetry. We are delighted that one of America's greatest poets is with us here tonight. May I welcome you all to a poetry reading by Archibald MacLeish in SMTI's Humanities Series.

Educated as a lawyer, Mr. MacLeish has had a varied career as poet, scholar, journalist, and government official. Mr. MacLeish was born in Glencoe, Illinois. He attended the Hotchkiss School and was graduated from Yale University in 1915. He was graduated from the Harvard Law school with honors in 1919.

He practiced law in Boston for several years. He then lived in France for a time while beginning his career as a writer. As a poet, Mr. MacLeish won the Pulitzer Prize in 1933 with his long poem, "Conquistador." His published verse includes "The Hamlet of Archibald MacLeish," "Panic," and "Act V." He is the author of the ballet "Union Pacific" and has written verse plays for stage and radio. His collected poems, published in 1952 won the Bollingen Prize, the National Book Award, and the Pulitzer Prize in 1953. "Songs for Eve" was published in 1954. His verse play "J.B." was produced in Broadway and won the Antoinette Perry Award and Pulitzer Prize in 1958. A new verse play, "Herakles," was published in 1965.

There is an influence perhaps early in his poetry of the great French poet Racine. His prose works include "The American Cause," "Poetry and Opinion," "Freedom is the Right to Choose," and "Poetry and Experience." In his writings, MacLeish consistently affirms his faith in man.

Mr. MacLeish entered government service in 1939, and he became Librarian of the Library of Congress and he remained in government throughout World War Second. Mr. MacLeish then joined remarkable associations for the academic life. He taught Constitutional Law at Harvard from 1919 to 1921. He was a special lecturer on creative writing in the English department at Princeton University in 1937. The following year he became the first curator of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard. He was a Reid Lecturer at Cambridge University, England in 1942. In 1949 Mr. MacLeish succeeded the late Theodore Spencer in one of Harvard's most distinguished chairs, the Boylston professorship, a post first held by John

Quincy Adams.

Until his resignation in 1962 he was tenth occupant of the Boylston professorship, endowed in 1771 by Nicholas Boylston, a Boston merchant. One of the privileges, which legend has attached to the Boylston professorship of Rhetoric and Poetry, Rhetoric and Oratory, is right to pasture a cow in Harvard Yard. Mr. MacLeish may not have taken full advantage of his privileges under the request, but there is little doubt that the muse has smiled upon him and that he has held her and told.

Following Robert Frost, Archibald MacLeish became Simpson lecturer at Amherst College. Frost and MacLeish have turned this position into a sort of an American regius professorship of Poetry minus perhaps the cantankerousness that goes with the election that that position at Oxford. I have had the most wonderful pleasure of visiting Mr. MacLeish at Amherst and of talking about poets and poetry and man and affairs with him. The experiences of talking about Reed and Valery, Frost and Elliot, Auden and (inaudible)?, with one who knew them is rare. What makes this unique is that he is himself a great poet.

Ladies and gentlemen, SMTI is proud to welcome Archibald McLeish. May I?

Archibald McLeish -- You'll never catch up with rumors, I tried to explain on the way down from the hills that the story that the Boylston professor has a right to pasture his cow in Harvard Yard is purely apocryphal. But he had another right, however, which is much more valuable but Professor Mehra thought it was perhaps a right that shouldn't be discussed in public. I'll be glad to tell any of you in private afterwards if you want to know.

It, um, gives me a strange feeling to hear this area spoken of as having been deprived of anything. There can hardly be a literate child in America, or perhaps I should say a literate adolescent who hasn't a picture in his mind of a rainy night on a New Bedford waterfront at the place where Moby Dick begins. Certainly if there is holy ground in America, it is here. One of the great creations of the American mind moves from here into the eternal ocean where it works out its destiny. And it makes a sort of link also, if I may say so, between you and me because it was up in those hills of mine that Melville wrote, and yours was scene of his writing.

I had an experience yesterday at Amherst which perhaps makes a good and introduction to the few words I want to say to you before I begin to read as any I can think of. I was called on by a representative of the Amherst Student. The Amherst Student is the name, I think the rather unfortunate name of the college paper. There is nothing studentious about that paper. And I was called on by a young man who asked me a number of questions. He started out by wanting to know the difference between Harvard undergraduates, whom I taught for twelve or fifteen years, and Amherst undergraduates. Obviously a comparison as the president knows very well which cannot possibly be made. You can't compare anything with a Harvard man.[audience laughter] Certainly not a Yale man.

But then finally after I had fanned out at that one and several others, he said, "Well Mr.

MacLeish, one last question." He said, "Maybe this is a question I shouldn't ask.' And I said, "There's nothing you can't ask. Go right ahead." Blithely. He said, "Well, Mr. MacLeish, what does a poet do that other people don't do?" [audience laughter] I took a deep breath and said, "Nothing, if he's a poet. Because a poet's business is the business of all mankind." But this of course didn't satisfy him and I could see at once what he was after. This was a way of saying, "What in the world is a poet anyway?" And that's a pretty good question, particularly in the United States at this present moment. There are some people who would not only say "what", they'd also say, "Why?"

It put me in mind of a story which I was telling Professor Mehra on the way down. He knew the first part of it before, and it's a rather famous story. But the second part of it he didn't. The first part comes from Robert Oppenheimer, the physicist who was for a long time the head of the Institute for Advance Studies at Princeton. And who was, as you know, the head of the project which made the atomic bomb during the Second World War. Oppenheimer was also of course a Harvard man and during his graduate years in Cambridge University, he was in the laboratory when he was approached by the great Professor Dirac, who said to him, "Oppenheimer, I understand you not only study physics, you write poetry. And Oppenheimer says he blushed becomingly. And Dirac said, "I simply don't understand it." He said, "In science you try to say what nobody knows so everybody can understand it. Whereas in poetry..." And he left the reverse of the sentence hanging, and walked out.

Well this is a very good story as it stood. And when I heard it I told it to I. A. Richards, who was originally a great critic at Cambridge University in England and later was a colleague of mine in the English Department at Harvard. I told him the story exactly as I told it to you and Ivor Richards said, "Exactly! Exactly! That's exactly it. In science you try to say what nobody knows so that everybody can understand it, whereas in poetry you try to say what everybody knows so that nobody can merely understand it." And this is a wonderful saying. The more you think about it, the more you realize how true it is. The business of poetry is the common human life, which we all share. Which is why the answer to my young friend when he asked me what a poet did that other people didn't do was simply nothing. If he's a poet there is nothing he does that isn't what everybody else does. But his business is so to do what he does, so to become aware of what he does, so to feel what he does that he can make other people see what they haven't seen. Make other people see what is so close to them that they can't see it.

A very good example of this is a poem and I'm taking tremendous chances in beginning with this because it's one of the greatest poems in the English language and nothing that I can read you can possibly stand up beside it, but it's a perfect example of this aspect of the operation of poetry, a perfect example of the why of poetry, and the what of poetry. This is Robert Herrick's poem called, "To Daffodils." And if there is anyone in this room who doesn't know it by heart, I can't see him or her because I'm sure you all do. It goes:

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun

Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the lasting day
Has run
But to his even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.
We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

Well Herrick isn't saying anything. Herrick is saying what we all know, that daffodils appear in the spring of the year and suddenly they are gone. And he's saying what every human being knows, or thinks he knows, that we also die, that we all live under sentence of death. That death is the familiar reality of our lives. We all know that and we forget it immediately, or never think about it. But what Herrick does is to make the brevity of the daffodil, the brevity and the beauty of the daffodil, so real, the mortality of the daffodil so poignant, that our own mortality becomes a present poignant ache in our hearts.

What the poet does is what everybody else does, but he does it with his eyes open. He does it with eyes that won't close. I want to read the first strophe of it to you again because it has a loveliness of it which I I can never have enough:

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to his even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

Well indeed we will. Indeed we will. And almost the most important thing that we can know about ourselves is the fact that we live in the presence of death, because it is only the realization of that fact which gives life its loveliness, its beauty, and its gaiety. If you want to

terrify yourself sometime, think to yourself what life would be like if we didn't die. If we had forever before is in our present form.

I speak of this also because something that happened to me after I got here at five o'clock in the evening. I was interviewed by a very charming newspaper man, who started with the most unexpected question I have ever been faced with by a newspaper man, and while I was assistant Secretary of State, I was faced with a great many, most of them not kindly meant. This question was kindly meant but was absolutely unanswerable. And the question was, "What do you think is the great advance of the time, and what do you think is the great loss of the time?" Well I ask you, "How would you reply to that?" I replied that the great advance of the time is perfectly obvious. That if you are talking about human progress, if you are talking about man's relation to his environment, man's ability to control his environment, then the advance of our time is incredible, it's unspeakable, it's marvelous. Not in my lifetime, but in the lifetime of men half my age. In the lifetime of a man who became conscious of what was going on when I was already forty. In that lifetime there has been a change in our control of our environment, which has produced not only spectacular journeys into outer space, but has completely changed the life of a women in her home, has completely change many aspects of human movement, human warmth, control of diseases, the medical advances are beyond words.

All this has happened, this is so clear and so obvious that I find myself boiling with irritation that the youngsters who've decided, the young poets, the young playwrights, who've decided that ours is a tragic, a depressed, a dreadful time. It's a time of tremendous achievement, heroic achievement.

Well what's the loss? The loss is the other side of this and it's as great. The loss is that we have somehow or other in this process lost touch with ourselves. We don't know who we are any more. And what you see happening among students and colleges and other students is a perfectly natural, inevitable result of this. They're bored to death with a life the significance of which they can no longer see. And who wouldn't be? Things have moved out so fast. The mechanical developments, the material developments have been so enormous that a sort of vacuum, an emptiness has been created in the middle of it. And the name of that emptiness is boredom. And the results of boredom are the kind of suicide, various kinds of suicide that we see around us.

The real problem of this time, and I said to my newspaper friend that I could terrify myself and maybe even terrify him by telling him how great I thought this danger was. The real problem of the time, is the problem of somehow or other getting into a relation with ourselves again before we lose our lives, lose our civilization, lose our nation. The risk of this nation, believe me, doesn't come from conspiracies here, there, or elsewhere. It comes from the inside of us in our hearts. And this problem is an enormous problem. And this problem is precisely the problem of poetry.

I become speechless with indignation when I find myself moving around this country as I do from time to time, reading and talking, to run in to the conception that poetry is a sort of marginal

decoration of life. It's lovely to have some poems to listen to. It's really nice to talk in a rhythmic way. Isn't that a pretty image? Isn't that a lovely sound? That isn't what poetry is about. Poetry is about our relation to our lives. It's about our lives. It's about ourselves, and you who've read poetry know it.

And as I say, having made these large statements and particularly having read Herrick's great poem, I am rash going on insane to read poems of my own, but I'm going to do it nevertheless. And I'm going to read, to begin with two poems which have something to do with what I have been saying. They're not very good poems to read because they were written rather to be seen on the page.

The first one is dedicated to Wallace Stevens that, um, am I inaudible? Am I having a tooth drawn? [audience laughter] It's dedicated to Wallace Stevens, also a Harvard man, and a very, very great poet, indeed. I don't think anything much needs to be said about it in advance except perhaps a reference at the end of it which I think you would see in the eye but not necessarily hear in the ear. It ends:

Generations of the dying
Fix the sea's dissolving salts
In stone, still trees,

This is a reference to the coral insect which as you know creates its reefs, creates its incredible trees by building its little house and dying in it. And the poem is this:

Why do we labor at the poem
Age after Age -- even an age like
This one, when the living rock
No longer lives and the cut stone perishes?---
Holderlin's question. Why be poet
Now when the meanings do not mean?--
When the stone shape is shaped stone?--
Durftiger Zeit? -- time without inwardness?
Why lie upon our beds at night
Holding a mouthful of words, exhausted
Most by the absence of the adversary?
Why be poet? Why be man!
Far out in the uttermost Andes
Mortized enormous stones are piled.
What is man? Who founds a poem
In the rubble of wild world -- wilderness.
The acropolis of eternity that crumbles
Time and again is mine -- my task.
The heart's necessity compels me:
Man I am: poet must be.

The labor of order has no rest;
To impose on the confused, fortuitous
Flowing away of the world, Form --
Still, cool, clean, obdurate,
Lasting forever, or at least Lasting:
a precarious monument
Promising immortality, for the wing
Moves and in the moving balances.
Why do we labor at the poem?
Out of the turbulence of the sea,
Flower by brittle flower, rises
The coral reef that calms the water.
Generations of the dying
Fix the sea's dissolving salts
In stone, still trees, their branches immovable,
Meaning
  the movement of the sea.

What this poem tries to say, and I use that very offensive phrase, I am constantly being asked in letters from children in the sixth grade in Lincoln, Nebraska, "What were you trying to say in the poem we had to read?" [audience laughter] What this poem tries to say is that its in the structure of poetry, it's in this coral reef built up over generations of time by the poetry of our language, by the poetry of French, by the poetry of German, the Chinese. It's in that structure of images caught out of the chaos of human experience that our knowledge of ourselves lies.

There's another poem that is aimed particularly at the generation which is, I hope largely in this room tonight, I can't see you very well beyond these lights. It's called "Ship's Log." That is to say a log kept of a ship's voyage.

What islands known, what passages discovered,
Rocks seen from far off to leeward, ""
Low, a few palms, odor of sandalwood,
The whole thing blue with dusk. . . .
Mostly I have relinquished and forgotten
Or grown accustomed, which is a way of forgetting.
The more I have travelled the less I have departed.
I had foreseen the unicorn, the nose-rings.
Once in my youth I bailed ship and launched her
As a blue-jay bolts from an apple-tree.
Now I go but have not gone:
Troy is Ithaca again but farther.
Only the young, on a first voyage, facing the
Whole horizon of the sea
Depart from any country. The old men

Sail to the sea-beach they have left behind.

I read this poem because it also, in a way that is painful to me, because I am an old man, tries to find its way toward an understanding of one's relation to the future. And believe me, those of you who are of that age, it really is true that the great thing in life is not to arrive but to depart, and that only the young really do depart or can.

I'm not talking, I need hardly say, about physical departures from this town to that town, or this state to another state, or the journey that all my students for the last ten or fifteen years have been making from here to Paris and back, a very different journey to the one I made to Paris, believe me. I'm not talking about those journeys. I'm talking about the departure out of now into the future. The releasing of oneself into the future.

I'll stop talking about poetry. There's no duller subject. Poems are the most interesting things in the world to me and poetry the least interesting. But I'll read one which specifically has to do with this, which some of you, I'm afraid know. I say, "I'm afraid," because hardly a year passed when I was teaching at Harvard but at the end of my initial lecture, some brilliant bright-faced boy would come up to me and say to me, Mr. MacLeish, "Why are you lecturing about poetry? Didn't you once write a poem saying that poems should not have any meaning?" Well, this is the poem referred to. It's called "Ars Poetica."

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit,
Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb,
Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown --
A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds.
A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs,
Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,
Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind --
A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs.
A poem should be equal to
Not true.
For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf.
For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea --
A poem should not mean

But be.

Well, to me I write/read that poem as saying that a poem should not mean its meaning, it shouldn't argue its meaning, it should be. It should be its meaning. It should fulfill and realize its meaning. And indeed the true poems, I think, do.

And that line, "wordless as the flight of birds," makes me think that two nights ago up in that hill country of mine, I came out of the door after dark, and for some or just at dark, and looked up into the sky for some reason to me unknown, and suddenly saw a wedge of geese go over, in complete silence and then that one honking note that so hurts the heart. And I say I'm going to stop talking about poetry and now read some poems.

This is a poem called "The Signal." And I think it says itself.

Why do they ring that bell
Twelve times in the steeple?
To say the hill has swung —
Houses and church and people.
All of them fast asleep —
To this place in time where the bell
Tilts to its iron tongue
Twelve times in the steeple.
Houses and hill don't care
Nor sleepers fast asleep.
But the steeple says to the star:
Here in the night we are,

Hill and houses and men.
Andromeda's shivering light,
Orion's distant flare.
Here we are in the night.
Here we go by again.
We go by you again says the bell,
Again, says the bell, again...

This is a poem called "The Silent Slain." And something does have to be said about it in several ways. First of all it has a line which echoes a fragment of a line from the Chanson de Roland, the old French epic poem, with its passage on the retreat over the Pyrenees and the death of Roland.

The other thing that has to be said about it is that it came out in the years just after the First World War, which it suddenly occurs to me it must seem to most of you as it would have seemed to me in my youth as if somebody talked about the War of 1812. It does seem incredibly far away, and yet this was the war of my youth. In this war, which was a war fought,

as most people have now forgotten, with an extraordinary degree of idealism and belief. A war in which no one was quite sure why we were doing what we were doing, but everyone knew we were doing it for the best of reasons.

A war in which just before the beginning of the Second Battle of the Marne, two New Mexico National Guardsmen battery came up to me and said, "Lieutenant, would you mind telling us why we're here for?" And I said, "What do you mean, this hillside?" And they said, "Well, no, why we're in France?" And all I could think of was to repeat one of those great resonant phrases of Woodrow Wilson's, "To make the world safe for democracy."

Well in this war, my brother who was a man of a very extraordinary degree of idealism, one of the first American flyers, was killed, and I had no particular, I had a sense of loss, but I had not bitterness about it because I knew how he felt about the war, I knew how I'd felt about it. But four or five years later, none of us felt that way anymore. For reasons which I think are too evident for me to go back and talk about them now. And this poem was written at that time.

We too, we too, descending once again
The hills of our own land, we too have heard
Far off — Ah, que ce cor a longue haleine —
The horn of Roland in the passages of Spain,
The first, the second blast, the failing third,
And with the third turned back and climbed once more
The steep road southward, and heard faint the sound
Of swords, of horses, the disastrous war,
And crossed the dark defile at last, and found
At Roncevaux upon the darkening plain
The dead against the dead and on the silent ground
The silent slain —

This is a poem called "Calypso's Island." And I would say you all remember except that I discover that knowledge of the Odyssey is beginning to fade in a very mysterious way from the undergraduate consciousness. I can't think why this should be so. Calypso's Island is one of the charming incidents of the letters of the world. It was here, you'll recall, that Odysseus, toward the end of his endless wandering in his attempt to get back to Ithaca. Finally all his companions, having been drowned, his ship having been wrecked, found himself cast on the shore of an island inhabited solely by an adorable and charming half woman, half goddess; a goddess in power but woman in self, and immortal who loved him, who took him in, who kept him for three years, gave him everything, coddled him, and at the end of that time, for some mysterious reason, mysterious, I think in quotation marks, Odysseus asked to be allowed to build a raft and go on home, go on home to what?

By this time he had been wandering almost twenty years, Penelope was twenty years older than when he had left her, and yet he wanted to go on home, to leave the enchanted island. It is very much in my mind at the moment, because I had just come down from a cruise down through the

Ionian Sea and past the island of Ithaca, and I can imagine how little one wants to return to the Island of Ithaca for any but purely aesthetic reasons. It's a rugged and forbidding island, but Penelope was there. Well, Odysseus is speaking in this poem:

I know very well, goddess, she is not beautiful
As you are: could not be. She is a woman,
Mortal, subject to the chances: duty of
Childbed, sorrow that changes cheeks, the tomb —
For unlike you she will grow grey, grow older.
Grey and older, sleep in that small room.
She is not beautiful as you, O golden!
You are immortal and will never change
And can make me immortal also, fold
Your garment round me, make me whole and strange
As those who live forever, not the while
That we live, keep me from those dogging dangers —
Ships and the wars — in this green, far-off island,
Silent of all but sea's eternal sound
Or sea-pine's when the lull of surf is silent.
Goddess, I know how excellent this ground,
What charmed contentment of the removed heart
The bees make in the lavender where pounding
Surf sounds far off and the bird that darts
Darts through its own eternity of light.
Motionless in motion, and the startled
Hare is startled into stone, the fly
Forever golden in the flickering glance
Of leafy sunlight that still holds it. I
Know you, goddess, and your caves that answer
Ocean's confused voices with a voice:
Your poplars where the storms are turned to dances;
Arms where the heart is turned. You give the choice
To hold forever what forever passes,
To hide from what will pass, forever. Moist,
Moist are your well-stones, goddess, cool your grasses
And she — she is a woman with that fault
Of change that will be death in her at last!
Nevertheless I long for the cold, salt,
Restless, contending sea and for the island
Where the grass dies and the seasons alter:
Where that one wears the sunlight for a while.

Perhaps I can read this poem with it, this is a poem called "Ever Since." And I don't think it needs any marginal notes:

What do you remember thinking back?
What do you think of at dusk in the slack
Evening when the mind refills
With the cool past as a well fills in
Darkness from forgotten rains?
Do you think of waking in the all-night train.
The curtains drawn, the Mediterranean
Blue, blue, and the sellers of oranges
Holding heaped up morning toward you?
Do you think of Kumamoto-Ken

And the clogs going by in the night and the scent of
Clean mats, the sound of the peepers.
The wind in the pines, the dark sleep?
Do you think how Santiago stands at
Night under its stars, under its Andes:
Its bells like heavy birds that climb
Widening circles out of time?
I saw them too. I know those places.
There are no mountains — scarcely a face
Of all the faces you have seen,
Or a tree or a town, but I have seen it.
Even at dark in the deep chair
Letting the long past take you, bear you —
Even then you never leave me, never can.
Your eyes close, your small hands
Keep their secrets in your lap:
Wherever you are we two were happy.
I wonder what those changing lovers do.
Watching each other in the darkening room,
Whose world together is the night they've shared:
Whose past is parting: strangers side by side.

This is a poem which I suppose a sort of capsule of advice, its extremely good advice. I have never yet met anyone who would take it willingly, I've even found some who pretend not understand it. It's called "What Any Lover Learns." The word lover, you know, is used in proper languages for both sexes, one who loves. This image here is an image which comes from this commonwealth of ours, not your part of it but mine, where streams flow down over stone and remain clear. They fill basins of stone and overflow when filled, fill basins of stone overflow and fall and fill. And they sometimes rush.

Water is heavy silver over stone.
Water is heavy silver over stone's

Refusal. It does not fall. It fills. It flows
Every crevice, every fault of the stone,
Every hollow. River does not run.
River presses its heavy silver self
Down into stone and stone refuses.
What runs,
Swirling and leaping into sun, is stone's
Refusal of the river, not the river.

It's true. There was a time a while ago, when I was relatively young, flourishing in my sixties, [audience laughter] and I was overcome with old age and I wrote a number of poems about being old. And now I feel so well and so much younger that I'd like to read them. This is called "The Old Man to the Lizard."

Lizard, lover of heat, of high
Noon, of the hot stone, the golden
Sun in your unblinking eye —
And they say you are old, lizard, older than
Rocks you run on with those delicate
Fishbone fingers, skittering over
Ovens even cricket in his shell
Could never sing in — tell me, lover of
Sun, lover of noon, lizard.
Is it because the sun is gold with
Flame you love it so? Or is
Your love because your blood is cold?

Another is "The Old Men and the Leaf Smoke." And I can read this now with some confidence whereas I couldn't a while ago because now almost no one remembers about the WPA (Works Progress Administration). There are a few ill-spirited editorial writers, enemies of the New Deal, who still rake it up occasionally. But most of you will have forgotten all about it. This is called "The Old Men and The Leaf Smoke" and it has nothing to do with the WPA. You've seen it, you've probably seen it around here, right now, you probably saw it under Eisenhower, too.

The old men rake the yards for winter
Burning the autumn-fallen leaves.
They have no lives, the one or the other.
The leaves are dead, the old men live
Only a little, light as a leaf,
Left to themselves of all their loves:
Light in the head most often too.
Raking the leaves, raking the lives.
Raking life and leaf together.
The old men smell of burning leaves.

But which is which they wonder — whether
Anyone tells the leaves and loves —
Anyone left, that is, who lives.

And I've got another old man, but he's in a happier situation, called "Where the Hay Fields Were."

Coming down the mountain in the twilight --
April it was and quiet in the air —-
I saw an old man and his little daughter
Burning the meadows where the hayfields were.
Forks full of flame he scattered in the meadows.
Sparkles of fire in the quiet air
Burned in their circles and the silver flowers
Danced like candles where the hayfields were, —-
Danced as she did in enchanted circles,
Curtsied and danced along the quiet air:
Slightly she danced in the stillness, in the twilight.
Dancing in the meadows where the hayfields were.

And then there's one, and I'll leave this theme, there's one which unhappily, even in the seventies, as distinguished from the sixties, the seventies incidentally are a great decade. Those of you that haven't gotten there should, um, hurry. [audience laughter] But this is, this is , this is, sadly true. It's title is "They Come No More, Those Words, Those Finches" F I N C H E S, birds. "They Come No More, Those Words, Those Finches."

Oh when you're young
And the words to your tongue
Like the birds to Saint Francis
With darting, with dances —
Wait! you say, Wait!
There's still time! It's not late!
And the next day you're old
And the words all as cold
As the birds in October
Sing over, sing over,
Sing Late! Late!
And Wait! you say, Wait!

Well this is a poem about people, about two people, specifically. Although also about a lot of people including again this generation of those who are young now, who haunt me so. The reason I love to go on teaching, despite the of fact that I've been retired for senility from one institution is that it involves a continuing relationship with the kind of people I like to talk to, meaning people at the opposite end of the rainbow from me.

This is about two specific individuals, one of them Joyce. This is in Paris in the years when I lived there, six or eight years in the twenties. A few things about Joyce I have to say before I read this, because otherwise it would be a little blind. This was written at the time when Joyce's "Ulysses" had just been published, there was a great skitter and stir about obscenity but the resultant profits hadn't poured in, hadn't gotten loud enough yet and nobody really realized that it was a very great book, and Mrs. Joyce, who was not above pulling her husband's leg, would say on occasion, she'd look at him, I can see at dinner table with six or eight of us, and Mrs. Joyce looking down the table, and looking down at him and saying, "Look at him, James Joyce the writer." All the scorn in the world in her voice and then she'd say, "He could have sung in the platform with McCormack." McCormack was a great Irish tenor of the time. And the truth is he could have. He could have. He had a beautiful small tenor voice. My wife, I have to say was because she's stopped it now. My wife was a magnificent singer, a really beautiful soprano. And Joyce used to teach her these Irish songs, I can hear his small voice going on at the piano.

Well also at this time Joyce was beginning to have the trouble with his eyes which finally blinded him and his wife would say that she'd go into his room at two in the morning and see him, he wrote in enormous letters on huge squares of paper on the wall, and she'd say, she said she'd see him standing there, and then she'd see him rolling on the floor with the pain in his eyes.

And the other figure here, who is not named, the lad in the Rue de Notre Dame de Champs, is Hemingway as he was at that time, when he was a very different looking man from the grizzled figure you've seen in photographs in Life Magazine and other aesthetic publications. [audience laughter] He was always strong, he was supple. He was a lovely man. He was a very dear friend of mine in those days. Well, so this poem is called "Years of the Dog" I've said enough about it so that by now you don't want to hear it.

Before, though, Paris was wonderful. Wanderers
Talking in all tongues from every country.
Fame was what they wanted in that town.
Fame could be found there too — flushed like quail in the
Cool dawn — struck among statues
Naked in hawthorn in the silver light.
James Joyce found it. Dublin bore him.
Could have sung with McCormack! Could he? He could.
Did he? He didn't. He walked by the winding Seine.
And what did he eat? He ate orts: oddities:
Oh he was poor: obscure: no one had heard of him:
Rolled on the floor on the floor with the pain in his eyes.
And found fame? He did. Ulysses: Yule Book:
Published to every people even in Erse.
(Molly Molly why did you say so Molly!)
Or the lad in the Rue de Notre Dame des Champs
At the carpenter's loft on the left-hand side going down —

The lad with the supple look like a sleepy panther —
And what became of him? Fame became of him.
Veteran out of the wars before he was twenty:
Famous at twenty-five: thirty a master —
Whittled a style for his time from a walnut stick
In a carpenter's loft in a street of that April city.
Where do they hang out now, the young ones, the wanderers.
Following fame by the rumor of praise in a town?
Where is fame in the world now? Where are the lovers of
Beauty of beauty that she moves among?

Well, since I'm dealing with people, I'll deal with one who is very much the center of the people in my life. It's called Poem in Prose.

This poem is for my wife.
I have made it plainly and honestly:
The mark is on it
Like the burl on the knife.

I have not made it for praise.
She has no more need for praise
Than summer has
Or the bright days.

In all that becomes a woman
Her words and her ways are beautiful:
Love's lovely duty,
the well-swept room.

Wherever she is there is sun
And time and a sweet air:
Peace is there,
Work done.

There are always curtains and flowers
And candles and baked bread
And a cloth spread
And a clean house.

Her voice when she sings is a voice
At dawn by a freshening spring
Where the wave leaps in the wind
And rejoices.

Wherever she is it is now.
It is here where the apples are:
Here in the stars,
In the quick hour.

The greatest and richest good,
My own life to live in,
This she has given me --

If giver could.

It is a fact, I don't know whether it's a fact established by the laws of physics or not, but it's a fact established the human psyche that no one at all can sit and listen to a voice going on reading poems for more than an hour. And I'm at the end of the hour and I'm going to read you one more if I may. And then I'm going to stop because I've taken too much advantage of you.

This is a poem, the title of which is "Not Marble, Nor the Gilded Monuments". And as you all know of course that is the first line of a sonnet of Shakespeare and therefore the sort of title that no man should steal for himself because it will return to punish him if he does. But the reason for borrowing it here was that this is quite truly not by way of, not by way of chat at all, but quite truly the poem that all poets and a great many people who are not poets but are drawn to the art at certain years in their life, try to write and that nobody has ever yet written. It can't be written, I don't believe at least, it certainly can't be written by me which is of course why I'm going to read it to you. And it hasn't been written I think by anyone else. Well, you'll see what I mean.

The praisers of women in their proud and beautiful poems
Naming the grave mouth and the hair and the eyes
Boasted those they loved should be forever remembered
These were lies
The words sound but the face in the Istrian sun is forgotten
The poet speaks but to her dead ears no more
The sleek throat is gone -and the breast that was troubled to listen
Shadow from door
Therefore I will not praise your knees nor your fine walking
Telling you men shall remember your name as long
As lips move or breath is spent or the iron of English
Rings from a tongue
I shall say you were young and your arms straight and you!
mouth scarlet
I shall say you will die and none will remember you
Your arms change and none remember the swish of your garments
Nor the click of your shoe
Not with my hand's strength not with difficult labor
Springing the obstinate words to the bones of your breast

And the stubborn line to your young stride and the breath to your breathing
And the beat to your haste
Shall I prevail on the hearts of unborn men to remember
(What is a dead girl but a shadowy ghost
Or a dead man's voice but a distant and vain affirmation
Like dream words most)
Therefore I will not speak of the undying glory of women
I will say you were young and straight and your skin fair
And you stood in the door and the sun was a shadow of leaves on your shoulders
And a leaf on your hair
I will not speak of the famous beauty of dead women
I will say the shape of a leaf lay once on your hair
Till the world ends and the eyes are out and the mouths broken
Look! It is there!
You've been a wonderful audience to read to, thank you so much. [Clapping] Well thank you very much.

You've brought this on your head, it will only be one. This is a poem called "You, Andrew Marvell". The reason for the title is those lines in Andrew Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress" which run and ever at my back I hear time's hurrying chariot drawing near. This was a poem I wrote when I was very young indeed. I had been in Persia and I was told that my father was dying. And I came back as fast as you could in those days, across the Syrian desert out of Persia, across the Syrian desert, down the Mediterranean, straight across the Atlantic and out to the western shore of Lake Michigan. And this is to a sense, in a sense related to that journey but it is also of course related to another journey.

And here face down beneath the sun
And here upon earth's noonward height
To feel the always coming on
The always rising of the night

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthy chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever climbing shadow grow

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening strange
The flooding dark about their knees
The mountains over Persia change

And now at Kermanshah the gate
Dark empty and the withered grass
And through the twilight now the late

Few travelers in the westward pass

And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls

And Spain go under the shore
Of Africa the gilded sand
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land

Nor now the long light on the sea

And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift how secretly
The shadow of the night comes on...

[Clapping]

Mehra: In two weeks on October 28th, at 8 pm in this auditorium our speaker will be Jerome Wiesner, Provost and Dean of Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He will speak on using science for public ends. You and your friends are cordially invited. To honor Mr. MacLeish, Mr. MacLeish's visit to SMTI and to give all those associated with this school a chance at being with him a little bit longer tonight, we have arranged a reception in the north lobby at the new campus. Guests of faculty, all students are welcome. So on to spiked chips and unspiked punch and just a little more of MacLeish. [Clapping]