

## Peter Golub

### Work

Before beginning my work  
Didn't D.H. Lawrence tremble at the sound of that word?  
Does this reference make things too heavy handed?  
Things get too long.

Before beginning –always welcome distraction.  
Procrastination just might save us from our work.  
Perhaps, if we worked less, there would be less garbage and anxiety?

And for Christ's sake if nothing else walk into a cathedral and look up  
And as you look up think of your schedule  
And as you think of your schedule begin to smile  
And the cathedral is like a mountain in a forgotten memory.

We stand alone and together in it.  
I know you'd much rather sleep than make something useful of your life.  
I love you.

\* \* \*

And at other times everything seems very simple  
Like a field covered in snow

The cat watches the snow  
It falls very slowly  
Profoundly alone, how can it be, you say

One hour then two  
And on the third hour you cannot help laughing to yourself a little  
Hot forehead pressed against cool glass, get out of the car fucker, you say to yourself

The snow falls, elegant and trite  
Nothing can be done about this  
You cannot make the snow less beautiful or less cliché

Eventually, you open the door  
Put your left foot out then your right  
Like a runway model, things are so simple and complex

Walking you see a man pushing a car up a hill  
You offer him your help, he declines  
He pushes the car, smiling to himself

## When Stephen Hawking Dies

Some day Stephen Hawking will die  
It may be at night or in the day  
Late in the afternoon or early in the morning

I will walk into the bathroom and the radio will turn on as it always does  
And everyone will be talking about physics  
At the end of the first broadcast they will play  
*In modo d'una marcia* by Robert Schumann  
Then begin talking about the elegance of the universe

I will stand looking at my face in the mirror  
And remember Claude Levi Strauss who lived to be 101  
And Richard Strauss who said he had outlived himself  
Eventually I will grab a toothbrush  
Straighten my hair  
And imagine your naked body sleeping in the bed

How will it come to us my love  
Do we know anything about physics  
Can you imagine an electron  
Or continuous energy

## **When You Have the Time, Watch This**

You should of course know that we do not have the time  
The hours make no images  
Squeak no sounds  
And yet they are there anyway  
Silently eating at our lives  
Like termites inside a tree

## **The Russian Olive**

*written with Andrew Haley*

With you I feel it is the 20<sup>th</sup> century  
The dirigibles take people  
To and from their unfulfilled desires  
Young men and women wave to gathering crowds in the sky

America cozies up to its Great Depression  
Joseph Vissarionovich steps outside  
The birches do not notice him

Joe steps out into the cold  
Steaming with his ax  
His boots crunch the snow  
In the frozen black mud ruts  
Leading to the sty

Moths die in the hands of his son  
The animals beg for the night to end

And who do they beg  
Where do they go from here  
There is no history Joe  
That is to say there is no story  
Language is a pretty picture inside a spandrel

Just the rampage of life  
And the moaning of the not yet dead

A big man  
Is lonely  
He learns French  
A woman loves him  
He wants more  
He writes and writes  
Composing a history  
Equal to his size  
Don't worry honey there are still more things left to buy

America moans  
Like an old yak in the snow

The vertical expression of a horizontal desire  
If a pig leaps on a man in sexual excitement it is not an offense

As the fun and presentiments gather  
And rotten fruit drops from orchard trees like a million soggy turds  
We gaze into the distant future  
But come along for you are not yet born  
This hidalgo will rise and fall  
Scrapping up millions of large cars and thick refrigerators  
Into the nests of wasps

The music raged against almost everything  
Your father the same as always  
A white figure at the end of a pool

4 33 hums in the supermarkets  
Throbbing with the abortions of white hippy girls  
In Salt Lake City; a school; a park; a flock of swans  
In the midst of all the commotion  
The streets are sprayed ashen with DDT  
Memorials raised for the brave past  
But no demur against the future  
Concentration camps renamed  
Khrushchev condos raised to the sky  
In the radios George and Martha  
Martha and Georgie boy sing a song  
About Roman life

And in white rooms just like these  
Our parents' minds were forged

They shat us out  
My love, they say, they did it all for us

In front of me you chew your fish  
Your mother, with her quiet greed  
More sane and more determined  
Had also dreamed  
And lay you like an egg into Mojave Desert heat  
A nest of Barbies, lights, and whores