

1971

# Retirement

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## RETIREMENT

1.

The moon, sun, stars  
go out, the galaxies squeak drily going out  
and into this night I am the former  
laundromat owner going out  
walking through retirement,  
no longer unhappy, now  
that I don't have to suffer the light  
of the grey moon, the sick grey

laundromat, streetlamp kind  
of light staggering pitifully into the dark,  
happy, in fact,  
that from my center this darkness extends  
that no one can get at

or look at like the darkness  
closed up in a fist—embraced by  
the laundromat when the owner, exhausted  
by bad light, draws down the blind  
and moves to warm Florida  
among the lovely flowers and cemeteries.

2

In celebration, I am gazing upward  
to perceive, leaning over me,  
unexpectedly visible in the heavens  
among blacked stars, the massed faces  
of my relations hazed in murmurings

like prayer,  
and it comes over me  
that I am dying.

I try to get out of his body but I can't.  
On entering the miracle of the retired you must go  
a little longer with him, into the silences.  
I wave them away from my bed,  
this is my dark, my retirement,

I have closed up shop and find  
it good that the light should close also;  
for once, in this dark, in retirement, all the lips  
of the women are blood red, the smaller  
stones that I fondle are all jewels, the sorry  
expressions displacing the comets  
are all that is wrong with this moment.  
I don't even  
know them; I am out walking, alone  
with my dying, his dying.  
The vault of their forgiveness cannot contain my dying.