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Two Egyptian Portrait Masks: Nefert-iti; Akhenaten

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and lifted in his hands the spirit-dust;
gave to the world chameleon his singing heart
and sacrificed upon the alter fame
his glowing candle fire of life and love.
Remembering, we pause to honor him
but knowing well the Ages honor beat
his image frail and pure, while millions here
behold his comet-star and see its flaming trail
burst brilliantly across the burning sky.
We hold aloft his laughter-breaking, black,
and bitter songs, and his immortal name.

Two Egyptian Portrait Masks / Robert Hayden

I Nefert-iti

A memory
carved on stelae of
the city Akhenaten built for God—

Fair of face Joyous with the Double Plume
Mistress of Happiness Endowed
with Favor at hearing whose Voice

one rejoices Lady of Grace
Great of Love whose disposition cheers
the Lord of Two Lands—

whose burntout
loveliness alive in stone
is like the living fire of gems

dynastic
death (gold mask and vulture wings)
charmed her with so she would never die.

II Akhenaten

Upon the
mountain Aten spoke
and set the spirit moving

in the
Pharoah's heart: O Lord of every land
shining forth for all:

Aten
multi-single like the sun
reflecting Him by Him

reflected.
Anubis howled. The royal prophet reeled
under the dazzling weight

of vision,
exalted—maddened^p—the spirit moving
in his heart: Aten Jahveh Allah God.

**Riding Back on a 30-Year-Old Tractor After
Pulling out the Car I Drove into a Ditch,
Watching Stars and Lightning from the
Northwest / Philip Bryant**

for Warren

Silent philosophy,
you and me
touching in the dark
like two shadows married to each other.
The noise of the tractor's engine
drowns out the dishonesty of our words,
the sky illuminates our faces into one vision;
the moment has arrived.
The tractor is moving down the road
at a speed we can both understand.
We join hands
through the night like
invisible brothers,
twins with the same mother,
the same god,
the same body;
and it's because we drive down this dirt
road together.