POEMS...

L. MARCUS
When I was a young man, I had a lyre
And while I held it in my hand
I could sing so beautifully.

The melody is gone,
Like a Springplanted seed in Autumn's harvest,
But the fruit is wisdom.

What does the seed know of wisdom,
Or Autumn fruit if song?

Yet, from the fruit may come
New seeds,
And then we shall never want
For Melody.

Let me say
What I can not sing,
And let the music be your own.

2.

The mist clears.
It is a simple greened field,
The moist grass so richly hued
And sparkling
In the early morning light.

There is a tree here,
A tree there,
But the man quietly standing there
Does not seem to know
How vast the expanse.

He smiles and says nothing.
Meeting his eyes,
Terrible knowledge leaps up within me.
3.

Why do I watch the sailing hawk?

Soon, I think,
There will be ducks,
Silly squawking ducks.
Then, the duck will dive.

I will tell you how.

He will quiver in his soaring.
His strong wings will press against the wind.
In that first bold thrust,
He will move up.

You can see that if you watch closely.

Then, his plummet begins.
See the ducks, then.
With sure artistry his movement.

Cry for the duck?
You silly chickens!
This is a hawk.
See now how he moves.

4.

Do you know the pleasure of your agony
Making mountain camp
After a twelve-hour climb
In a sleetling rain?

When the morning comes,
The sky will clear.
If you remain another night,
The night, too, will be clear.
From the mountain-top
You will look down,
And you will see the lights.

You will think it strange
That the people
Who live so close to those places
Can not see
Where they live
Nor know
The desire to be warm.

On a cold winter's day
I had a warm remembrance.

It moved outward
From somewhere deep within me,
Until it brought
Comfort to my limbs
And a glow like warm brandy
To my cheeks.

Somewhere there is a warm house,
But it lacks the beauty
Of the cold winter's day.

Spring will come.
I shall not be there,
But I shall still delight
In the warm remembrance
Of an old dream.

One day
Where the children played
There came a smiling man
From a dead planet.
He stood
As if to show he knew
The way of children
And a stranger.

Soon,
More curious than startled,
The children shuffled,
Eyeing the figure that
Seemed not to menace
After all.

"He is this," one said,
"Or perhaps that," another suggested.

One child looked directly
At the man.
The stranger's eyes smiled,
His mouth unchanged.

In time,
The boldest spoke.
The stranger nodded.
Another tried.

"He does not speak
Our language," one proposed
After the failure
Of several efforts to prompt
Conversation from the visitor.

"He knows,"
Another corrected:
"See his eyes."
"He understands?"
Another asked.
"You understand?" he said
To the stranger.
The man's expression
Didn't change,
They swore later,
But all the same
They knew he understood.

They were pleased,
So pleased,
They turned from their visitor
For a moment,
To share their opinion.

When they glanced back,
He was gone.

They never saw him again,
But they know
That something
Important
And good
Had happened for him
And for themselves.