

57 Clap Hands Beat Time

Be still my soul. Be still till stillness stills.

Distilling stillness absolute.

One hand clapping.

Clap hands, my mother prompted me in childhood.

Clap hands, clap hands, till Daddy comes home.

- He didn't sometimes.

But I clapped.

Language? Or silence?

Man's perverse predicament.

And time?

Beat time, my music-teacher metronomed, intoned.

Depicting silence desolate as time

In purposeful perspective. Beating time

Became my notion of the motionless.

Emotionless the Buddhist, Taoist monk

Leaves language altogether. All together, sing

(Soul-startled as Spinoza)

Words are self-sentencing.

Grinding our insights as he ground his lenses.

Precisely. Polished. So that we may see

Ourselves and others in each grinding utterance.

Freedom from words, from utterance, Franz Kafka quested.

Should the poet seek unceasingly

To cease to seek unceasingly to cease?

Beseech my freedom. Reach my silence also.

And we'll beg pardon presently together

Of sun dials, watches, clocks.

And parched philosophies.

Defying our dismay.

Clap hands. Beat Time.