

## I walk the night

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The land stretches way into a sleep  
and my feet are tired.

I can never reach the line that I see.

Further and further away from me it gets,

Yet every step should bring me closer.

I turn giving up my journey.

As I sit on this huge rock under a huge tree,  
the night is still.

Still, for the small place we occupy in the great night.

Stars twinkle low above my head,

and I, ambitious tyrant that I am or think I am,

reach to take a few for myself,

but they remain smiling there

now my hands are tired from their unsuccessful reaching-out.

Take me distant lake

like you are, at peace with the night moon.

You who cry only where a rock points sharply up

and where playful fish jump to kiss the light,

and disappear again in a splash

whispering to a last circle.

/ Birds too,

Birds too, dart, pulling threads up and across,  
weaving a giddy head,  
turning the trees upside down,  
shaking off swarms of candleflies.  
Next morning the damaged fruits lay  
evidence of the quiet struggle.

Somewhere in this vastness,  
this night that I walk, somewhere  
lies the all embracing word.

A leaf falls slowly to the ground,  
where all things must eventually fall;  
slowly and surely as if stealing its way  
before dawn stirs.

Has it claimed its own death during the night?  
- I know leaves to die during the day only -  
The sun has dried them to crisp yellow brown,  
the wind snaps them away from their knotted hold.  
they plunge in all directions, wind in their death-coat.  
the agony comes to rest on the floor,  
crisp words of a passage on a page.



Clouds must gather with rage burst into storms,  
darkening the land.

And amidst, I hear a foreign tongue  
shaking the soul with every utterance,  
Spitting blinding streaks of pure silver on every ear.  
Then, the rain will fall.

Light and heavy showers will race,  
will swell, cutting the earth away.

I see the past, the present and the future  
travel swiftly  
almost in the same breath.

A rag is snatched by a branch flirting from the bank,  
and remains partly stuck in the mud.

Quieted now to streams that people cross,  
I stand in the shallow cooling my feet.  
I walk in the shade of that big tree  
trampling the fallen leaf into the darkness  
where everything returns.

Life now is not glossed-over green,  
or rustling yellow brown.

Life is no more, or is life now begun,  
dark and soggy manure?

I wake myself from this huge rock and walk  
afraid in the night.

LeRoy Clarke

1967.