

## George S. Lensing and Ronald Moran: On Robert Bly

The poems of Silence in the Snowy Fields are very much of a world. They are not posited on moments of urgent circumstance, at least exteriorly. The poet often pictures himself in corn fields or farm houses; the drama of the poem, exteriorly, is nothing more than the approach of darkness or falling asleep or awaking or driving the car from city to city. The force of the poem consequently depends upon the establishment of a sense of intense subjectivity within these contexts of the commonplace. In each case the invasion of the psyche by a sudden moment of insight, almost a revelation, occurs with the poet most often in a state of solitude and in conjunction with some element of the natural world.

The poems are born of whimsy and casual encounter; they aim at definition of mood, which is of itself almost always evanescent. The language is colloquial--sometimes that of short, clipped, almost flat statements ("I am driving; it is dusk"), in other poems much looser and more lyrically effusive ("Shouts rise from the harbor of the blood, / Mist, and masts rising, the knock of wooden tackle in the sunlight"). The poems identify specific towns and states and seasons--most often northern Midwestern states; almost always winter. The participial titles, frequently keys with which to unlock the associative pattern of the images, induce a sense of drifting motion, a suspension of time ("Driving to Town Late to Mail a Letter," "After Drinking All Night with a Friend, We Go Out In a Boat at Dawn to See Who Can Write the Best Poem," "Remembering In Oslo the Old Picture of the Magna Carta").

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