

>74?

In cleaning out my files of student papers this summer, I came across the following thank-you, written almost four years ago [which means I don't clean out often enough!]. It was written at the end of my course in the roots of biblical language. Sometimes the Spirit converges teacher/student/moment-of-readiness, and this was one of those instances. Meditating on the poem can help communicating the feeling of both the power and the impotence of language, its power to express the limited and Limitless and also its limits in bespeaking the Transcendent. Human utterance can be called "religious" when it exhibits this paradox and polarity.

FOR A WELL-BELOVED PRECEPTOR

(A small payment of tuition)

The atmosphere of this poem reminds me of something Henry James said in his classic "The Art of Fiction" [reproduced in Miller, MYTH AND METHOD (U.Nebr./60); p.20]: "No one can ever have made a seriously artistic attempt without becoming conscious of an immense increase--a kind of revelation--of freedom.".....See also my translation of Ps.4 [#1173], which expresses this expansive "high" under the metaphor of space.

How well you have watered--  
how incredible the increase.  
How the heaven is full full  
full of a whole a mighty migration of wings,  
and O how fair the bird--  
as a dove when only one  
is downward in the sky.  
And O the sound  
the interstellar sigh  
the thundrous whisper of return  
that risen flesh makes,  
supersemantic sound  
that Word makes  
free of word.

Several years later, I visited Don in his Marble Collegiate Church office. Only two photos standing on his desk. He said of Harry Emerson Fosdick, "The greatest preacher I ever heard" (though Norman Vincent Peale was then the church's preacher) & "The greatest teacher I ever had, you." *Swish*

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