

After a Rain

They noticed, you see, that I was a noticing
kind of person, and so they left the dictionary
out in the rain and I noticed it,
moreover I noticed it was open to the *rain* page,
much harm had come to it, it had aged to the age
of ninety-five paper years, and I noticed *rainbow*
follows *rain* in the book, just as it does in the
real world, and I noticed it was silly of me to
notice so much but I noticed there is no stationery
in heaven, I noticed an infant will grip your hand like
there is no tomorrow, while the very aged
will give you a weightless hand for the same reason,
I noticed in a loving frenzy that some are hemlocked
and others are not (believe me yours unspeakably obliged)
I noticed whoever I met in my search for entrance
into this world went too far (but that was their
destination) and I noticed the road followed roughly
the route of a zipper around a closed case,
I noticed the sea was human but no one believed me,
and that some birds have the wingspan of an inch
and some flowers the petal span of a foot yet the two
are very well suited to each other, I noticed that.
There are eight major emotional states but I forget
seven of them, I can hear the ambulance singing
but I do not think it will stop for me,
because I noticed the space between the waterfall and
the rock and I am safe there, resting in
the cradle of all there is, the way a sea horse
(when it is tired) will tie its tail to a seaweed
and rest, and there has not been, in my opinion,
enough astonishment over this fact, so now I will
withdraw my interest in the whole external world
while I am in the noticing mode, notice how I

talk to you just as if you were sitting in my lap
and not as if it were raining, not as if there were
a sheet of water between us or anything else.

My Pet, My Clock

A pet is a good way to tell time, better than a clock, for time is a measure of the changing positions of objects, and soon it will be time to feed the pet, to exercise the pet, to replace its little ball, clip its nails or talons, wash it ever so gently, vacuum up its sheddings and so forth. And eventually the sad day comes when it must die, and then it is time to get another. A clock, on the other hand and against all appearances, is a very poor way to tell time, for all it ever does is sit there or hang on the wall, and very seldom does it do anything of itself to remind you of time. Of course we live in a country where twice a year time springs forward or falls back, and on those occasions — the mock birthdays of time — a little fuss must be made over the clock, but other than that it does not really ask for much. If you are desirous of saving time one of the best things you can do is buy your clock batteries on one of its birthdays, eliminating the need for a gift on the next occasion. But other than these few inconveniences the care of your clock will never be a way of marking time, despite the fact we bring them into our homes for just this purpose. A clock is in fact no better than a dead pet. I myself have neither clock nor pet, and well might you ask what I do for time, though I prefer to put it somewhat differently: what has time ever done for me? Very little, it would seem; time has robbed me of my youth, my energy, strength, sprite, the vigor I was in my childhood famous for, and all the natural oils in my once-luxurious tresses. Once I felt enough for time to invest in a little gold fish, but alas he died two days later in a gallant attempt to jump his bowl, which was successful, though not in time, for in England there is a physicist by the name of Julian Barbour who believes time does not exist as we commonly perceive it to exist, that is in a passing continuum; no, he believes time, our time, time on earth, is made up of unconnected, absolutely discrete units, the length of an instant, which eternally occur, having no past and no future. In this sense of time, my gold fish is forever happily swimming in his new bowl and forever leaping from it in an adventurous frolic, or spasm of despair, depending on your view, which is also subject to time, as it is evident the views of old age do not coincide with youthful ones. But in this other world, the world

of discrete eternal units, your pet needs his dinner, as he is whining at his bowl, yet does not need his dinner, as he has just eaten and is lying by the fire. Your pet has become a most inaccurate way of marking time, whereas the lifeless clock on the mantle, a discrete unit itself, dependent on no one and subject not to the passing of time, will finally have its day and serve its true purpose of marking time, which neither moves forward nor falls back, requiring no adjustments whatsoever, though, when this day comes and the clock is restored to its rightful place in our homes, if not our hearts, I often wonder if it will still be said when looking at a clock, as is the custom now, *how beautiful it is to have lived, how blessed that one can die.*