

V.B. Price

**FIVE**

**MORTAL**

**PLEASURES**

Christmas 2000

I. PERSPECTIVE

Rising up from old mistrust  
there's nowhere to be anymore  
but out beyond where we are, present  
at the opening of the worlds,

star fathoming, spinning without a wobble,  
far seeing who we really are:  
blooming, painless, free; your hardships  
as beautiful as turbulence seen

from the top of the sacred world; insight  
opening so far around ourselves  
we feel ourselves to be beyond our sight, so intimately  
unknown all separation ends.

What joy to keep  
just patiently rising.

## II. OASIS

Seeing through the blues,  
we've never lost a thing.  
Veins of green along a canyon's edge,  
verdant in seeps that flow through cracks

great cliffs have made so beans and corn  
and squash can emerald through the desert:  
This oasis of our days: What could be more  
seriously down to the bone

than a green, wet truth when we're dying  
of fathoming thirst? Ah, there it is:  
Pure home. We've found it,  
surprising us, around all corners, where hope

settles in to irritate despair.  
Oases are everywhere.

## III. RETREATS

Waking up, we know there's nowhere to be  
but safe – all friendship the veil of grace, even the terrible  
friendship of the fathomless,  
reminding us to trust

even the emptiest of spaces  
all the way up to the full society of stars.  
Hiding out, far into the farthest corners there, free  
even from demands we should never really escape,

the mystery attracts us  
like honest talk in cafes  
where conversation is the surf of truth  
muffling the fear around us.

We are always just a thought way  
from all safe harbors.

#### IV. PATIENCE

Love is never amiss, the old poet said.  
Bottoming out, even now the fulfilment is ahead.  
It's always never too late, waiting with a will,  
to trust without knowing the purpose.

Fear is just a pack of lies. We have no choice  
but to polish the mountain. Get out of the way. Patiently  
calm down. Hope is never an illusion.  
We're always on that sharp high wire

looping like a corkscrew  
over the gorge of "rapture and despair."  
Choosing the unknown, we feel the desire to breathe  
is stronger than all

mad predicaments.  
Yield to that desire.

#### V. RELEASE

Having agreed, we changed our lives.  
And still they died. Grieving scours,  
scourges, scathes, it rakes us.  
Gasping, we can't give up.

Loss begins for us at the very beginning.  
We are all a massing of voids and the missing. This can't be sad  
anymore than distance, space, deep time are sad.  
They are. Love is.

never out of place.  
Free falling back, we yield, released to be  
gazed upon  
by unknowable kindness.

Always the last true calling  
is giving in to joy.