

V.B. Price

From

W A T C H I N G Y O U G O

for my father

AT 9255 SWALLOW DRIVE, LOS ANGELES

Watching you go
in your island garden above the smog,
above the dazzling ruins
rich with sauces, starry killers;

watching you go,
an Ozymandias among his orchids,
the phantom pain of your absent lives
like your fingers, numb and jittery,
tugging at gray leaves, skin so dry
it skids across the bones;

watching you go,
an object among your objects
I visited all my life
as a darling oddity,
petted, even loved,
darting among the glamour,
never abandoned, never home;

watching you go,
alone with your fascinations,
your museum of temptations;

watching you go,
watching myself left behind, a subject
tending to your taste, your place, your pyramid,
my cherished past erased again,

once again, for good;

watching you go,
I see myself emerge from you,
your sneer of cold command,
a guest no longer in your life,
my old wings
unpeeling in the Summer Time;

watching you go,
as lonely as I always am,
a prince and a pauper
who never learned the trick;

watching you go
at last,
like catching each day
of the Parthenon's decay
in a single glance or two