

1986

## Two Poems for H. D. 1886/1986

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## Two Poems for H.D. 1886/1986 · Susan Howe

Life is deep and swift — Spars without the Routes but the Billows designate.

What a Comrade is Human Thought!

The Circumstance you so sweetly recall, steals from my remembrance. . . (L1031)

Emily Dickinson wrote this in a letter shortly before her death. She died on May 15, 1886, in Amherst, Massachusetts. On September 10, 1886, Hilda Doolittle was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

I had accepted as part of my racial, my religious inheritance, the abstract idea of immortality, or of the personal soul's existence in some form or other, after it has shed the outworn or outgrown body. (TF 43)

Thought is a thread leading back. Ariadne's thread. Ecstasy is outside time. "Are we psychic coral-polyps? Do we build on one another?" H.D. asked in *Tribute to Freud*.

Yes we do build on one another.

I.  
Site of old Shekomeko  
Sledges set out to hew pine

Far back as human memory  
a stoic assembly chanting

By degrees we first  
penetrated these parts

Right fact and split sect

earlier ghost-lieutenant  
Skin with a hero's name

We say your name  
Our ears enclose us

how intellect bends over mirrors

Recreation of a poor ghost  
clinging to half face

On the path he met Wonder

Immaculate identical Newborn  
A stone warns the traveler

What is harder than a stone  
One wondertale smothers another

Isolation of selfsame children

The Frost the Sun the Wind  
a true wondertale

II.  
Cloud author evese

Out of deep sleep  
Old to others yes

Rigmarole

scales of her ring  
scales of herring

old nucleus Thought  
storm-tossed innermost

fragment of a name  
singing to figment

Bark leanto

silver in starlight  
inhabited by Fire

Lady of the Forest  
Fear has found you

Fear has found you  
walking at evening

deepness to be It  
and to be found

Rabbitrabbit

Walking and calling wild animals  
together

all that will ever happen  
Before and before

Shekomeko was an early Moravian-Indian settlement near what is now Sharon, Connecticut. It vanished long ago.

On the first of each month people in Pennsylvania and all over New England say "Rabbit rabbit" for luck. I don't know where or when the custom originated.