

For Anna Akhmatova
A White Poem

To read your poems of love and long-suffering
is to touch the white yard lilacs I knew as a child,
to rub the rough raspberry ruby I held in my hands,
one winter a long time ago.

To see in my misted mind the two white swans
who swim the park lake side by side hiding
their heads then diving, sure and arrogant,
into the mossgreen waters and rising again as one ...
in a stir of white, white wings.

It is all my remembrances of grace and loss
brought near now face to face, then vanishing
like last night's dream , where I saw a dark presence
who called to me and begged me to deny
the gods and heaven. All the time I knew that you were there,
and I stood fast and strong until the presence disappeared
and the room was filled by one white poem.