

Robert Duncan

THE OPENING OF THE FIELD
ROOTS AND BRANCHES
BENDING THE BOW

The magnificence of Freud is that he never seeks to cure someone from being himself. The underlying premise in Freud is that every patient is Man himself, and every disease is his revelation.

Robert Duncan

QUESTION: I wanted to ask you about the shifting of form in the middle of a poem, such as POEM BEGINNING WITH A LINE BY PINDAR.

ANSWER: I always shift - beginning with letters, as I was reading more and more about Gestalt and being more and more aware intensively (& that would include with my own course of thought) (I'm sure it must have been wandering before) - the minute an idea would appear I would divert myself so that I would force something that was not the idea in, and then this would make it require a larger context - in other words I wouldn't write an idea through a period - the minute it appeared to me I'd say, Gee, if it's appeared to me it's appeared to my reader - now that showed me how thoroughly I believed that ideas are there in the language & not in my head - it has always seemed to me that an artist is composing for a human being that is wholer, wiser, and everything that he is - I think the first time I realized that was listening to the #111 of Beethoven, I thought, my God, no matter what Beethoven is making this work for, he is pouring all of himself over there in trust, that now many people I knew were going to be listening to it, and yet you can't believe you're listening to it when you're listening to it - because it's so much everything - today the great complaint is, "Oh that poem's hard to read", or "Why doesn't he make it clearer right away" - the totality that rushes into a poem by its nature can't guard against this - but to me the other thing that was hidden in it was that you really do go over there into this largest community with everything you've got because that's what the reader wants, that real reader wants this totality & it will go beyond you to the person who always is beyond you -

4-10-72, unpublished NYQ Craft Interview

