

Helen Vendler on: "Shooting Script"

Giving up the prism, the lens, the map, and pulling herself up by her own roots, Rich, as *The Will to Change* closes, eats the last meal in her own neighborhood and prepares, deprived of all instruments, to move on, guided only by the fortuitous cracks in the plaster, the innate lifeline, the traumatic rays of the bullet-hole. She could hardly have been more frank; from formalism to--not freedom, but, as always--a new version of truth. If this is a revolution, it is one bound like Ixion on the wheel of the past--environmental past in the plaster, genetic past in the lifeline, traumatic past in the bullet-hole. And if it is revolution, it is one which does not wish to deny the reality of past choices and past modes of life. Putting off in her boat, Rich watches "the lights on the shore I had left for a long time; each one, it seemed to me, was a light I might have lit, in the old days" ("Shooting Script," II, number 13). Houselights and hearthfires, abandoned, remembered, light the departure.

From *Parnassus* (1973).

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