

*Adrienne Rich*

## Two Poems

by  
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### ADDRESS

Orientation of the word toward its addressee has an extremely high significance. In point of fact, word is a two-sided act. It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant? Each and every word expresses the "one" in relation to the "other"? A word is territory shared by both addressor and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor.

V.N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*

If all we would speak is ideology  
believable walking past pent-up Christmas trees  
in a California parking lot day before Thanksgiving hot sun on faint  
scent of spruce in the supermarket  
mixed metaphors of food  
faces expectant, baffled, angered, distracted  
wandering aisles or like me and the man ahead of me, buying only milk  
my car door grabbed open by a woman  
thinking it her husband's car honking for her somewhere else

--and I think it true indeed I know  
I who came just for milk am speaking it : though  
wanting to stand somewhere beyond

this civic nausea

: desiring not to stand apart  
like Jeffers giving up on his kind loving only inhuman creatures  
because they transcend ideology in eternity as he thought  
but he wasn't writing to them  
nor today's gull perched on the traffic light

Nor can this be about remorse that merely  
stands staring over its shopping cart  
feeling its vague ideological thoughts

nor about lines of credit  
blanketing shame and fear

nor being conscripted for violence  
from without beckoning at rage within

I know what it cannot be

But who at the checkout this one day  
do I address who is addressing me  
what's the approach whose the manners  
whose dignity whose truth  
when the change-purse is tipped into the palm  
for an exact amount without which

**PRICES ON REQUEST**

A deluxe blending machine  
A chair with truth's coat-of-arms  
A murderous code of manners  
A silver cocktail reflecting a tiny severed hand  
A small bird stuffed with print and roasted  
A microwaved foie gras  
A row of lucite chessmen filled with shaving lotion  
A bloodred valentine to power  
A watered-silk innocence  
A dry-ice carrier for conscience donations  
A used set of satin sheets folded to go  
A box at the opera of suffering  
A season at the tropical villa, all expenses  
A Caterpillar's tracks gashing the environment  
A bad day for students of the environment  
A breakdown of the blending machine  
A rush to put it in order  
A song in the chapel a speech a press release

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