

Nicholas Teaches Us About Leaving

We are the group
Come together to be the group and only by this
Are we the group.
This circle which began before we existed in it
And will exist after we each leave. In this way
We mirror the wider universe.

Each of us carries our dark package into the room.
Each night we unwrap a little more.
A death here, a separation there
A longing that never will be filled
A vampire's feast of emptiness
Our little victories are entrées

Still the work shines
In its own dull light.

And I am surprised
At what those whom I despised
Can teach me.

When Nicholas speaks about his mother
We hear the tightening noose of the old double-bind
Love and dependence. Money and power
Are jealous children peeking through a crack
In the ballroom doors. We squeal at the obvious trap
And touch its shining teeth with a tenderness
That comes from experience
And scars.

He is the one that needs this most I think
As he's the one who prepares to go.
His baby eyes asked an age old question
No. I can't tell you what it is
I can only tell you what it felt like—that in dealing
With leaving—wives and lovers mostly—
He taught us some nobility, humble
And as close to real as I will ever know.
With each of us he left a gift
His words hang here around the circle like a fire
This ritual in the age of fake ritual.
This coven in the age of computers. He stands to leave
And like the wordless tribe that made us what we are
We ask for messages from the unknown world
We may never know. Tears, quick
Touch us all—and let us go.

Lyndon Walker

Ph: +61 3 9689 3888;
fax: + 613 9689 4901;
walkerl@ocean.com.au