

So close we can hear each other's thoughts,
But not close enough to understand.

So near we are touching,
But not near enough to feel.
Eyes penetrating into mine,
But not deep enough to see.

What should be warm

Lacks warmth.

— Sheryl Wright

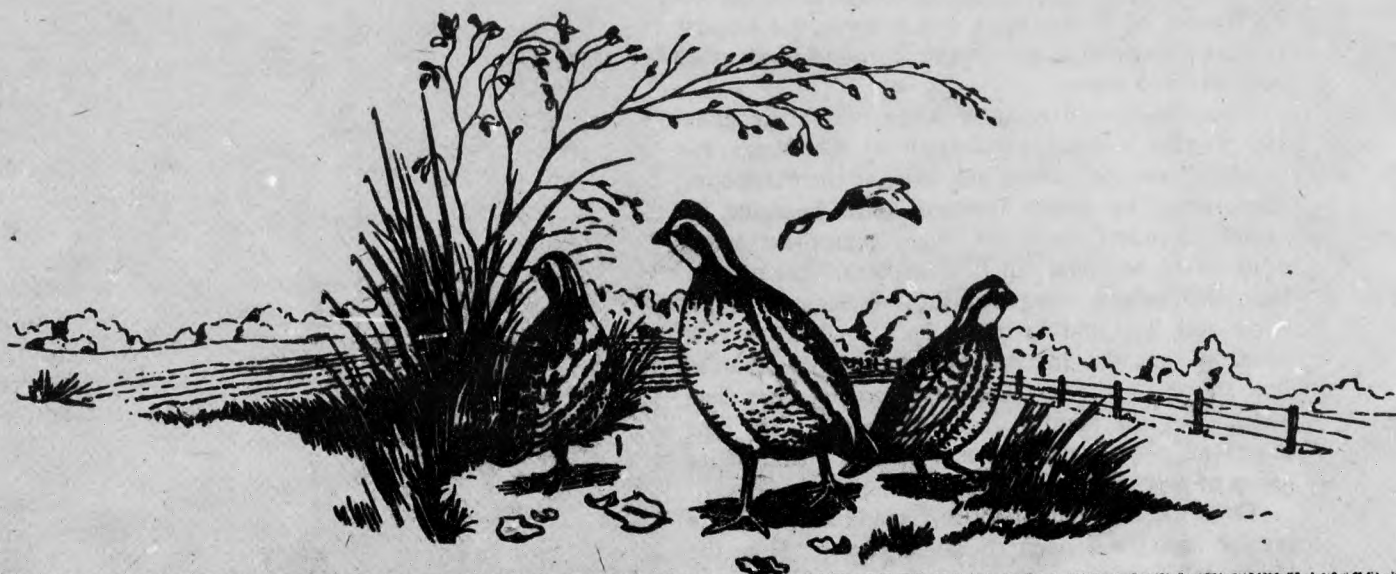
POETRY

Walking

Walking.
The gnarled brown tree roots rest
Softly, in the green moss.
Quiet, protected by the earth.

Strange how I have no roots
My soul drifts restlessly from cloud to cloud
Seeking - for what?
Maybe reality.

— Shirley Mellish



SMALL VOICES

"Small voices, speak up!"
said the giant --
but small voices shrank.

The giant got up,
and he bellowed
and rambled:

"It's time you hollered,
ranted and snapped --
showed where you are!"

Put some kick in your
speech and some feet
on your words!"

But the small voices
huddled, smaller [
than before.

"What makes you die
out and think you can
sit in the dark --

do you think you can
run at the snail
of your voice?

Come on! Let's hear you
sling it! I want to
hear noise!

There's lots to make
noise with: I know you
can make it!"

But small voices
were holding a
conference.

— C.A.T.

Thoughts, After

Yeah, you did it again.
Took that stuff. So
A few hours of crazy patterns, time
Slowed down so that you can almost
Step outside your body and watch yourself;
Then, speeded up so that everything seems
Rushing past you at crazy angles, people
Talking in blurbs, your head
Swimming in a whirlpool of sensory
Fragments. . . spinning so fast that
You instinctively grip the arms of your chair, hoping
That after this rush, you'll feel that gentle leveling, that
Relieving awareness of morality restoring itself.

It levels.
You can feel it. Almost
Like gliding slowly down into the world,
Back to familiar surroundings that were
There all the time. . . but, different, somehow.
You breathe easier, talk a bit wearily, but
In longer, more confident, sentences.
You know what you're saying, now. You're
Not sidetracked as easily. A flicking cigarette
Doesn't distract you, now. That same flick that,
An hour earlier, would have turned into
A somersaulting ball of flame.
Not now. You're levelling.
Coming down.

You can feel it in your gut.
That pain is sure, now (But, hell,
Nothing's pure.) Maybe
It's that pain, nagging, that makes you think.
Your head is still a bit fuzzy, your bowels sore,
Your eyes ache from the light filtering
Through the windows. They're still a bit big.
Sensitive. Your nerves jangle easily.
And you think.

What happened?
Nothing, really. But,
A couple of times, you
Nearly lost your mind, nearly got sucked into that
Whirlpool. But, you knew that
Before you took it. Maybe
That's what you're trying to think about. And
What you might think about
Next time.
After.

— Thomas