

POEM FOR KENNETH REXROTH

Now the peach blossom withers.
How many others have gone before
down that long hallway
where footsteps end in darkness?

Laughter laps along the shores
of memory and the still
waters of the lake
fill up with willow boughs.

Now the gods of Tao --
the eight immortals
lift up pieces of the sky
for you to enter.

Buddhist scriptures crumble
as the pigment of your days
rubs off the rose.
And how shall you appear

among the shades of history?
As anarchist or scholar?
In the last year cut up all the flowers
and plant a single oak tree in your garden.