



# The First Four Books of Poems

*W.S. Merwin*

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## **Half Roundel**

I make no prayer  
For the spoilt season,  
The weed of Eden.  
I make no prayer.  
Save us the green  
In the weed of time.

Now is November;  
In night uneasy  
Nothing I say.  
I make no prayer.  
Save us from the water  
That washes us away.

What do I ponder?  
All smiled disguise,  
Lights in cold places,  
I make no prayer.  
Save us from air  
That wears us loosely.

The leaf of summer  
To cold has come  
In little time.  
I make no prayer.  
From earth deliver  
And the dark therein.

Now is no whisper  
Through all the living.  
I speak to nothing.  
I make no prayer.  
Save us from fire  
Consuming up and down.

## **Evening with Lee Shore and Cliffs**

Sea-shimmer, faint haze, and far out a bird  
Dipping for flies or fish. Then, when over  
That wide silk suddenly the shadow  
Spread skating, who turned with a shiver

High in the rocks? And knew, then only, the waves'  
Layering patience: how they would follow after,  
After, dogged as sleep, to his inland  
Dreams, oh beyond the one lamb that cried  
In the olives, past the pines' derision. And heard  
Behind him not the sea's gaiety but its laughter.

### **The Fishermen**

When you think how big their feet are in black rubber  
And it slippery underfoot always, it is clever  
How they thread and manage among the sprawled nets, lines,  
Hooks, spidery cages with small entrances.  
But they are used to it. We do not know their names.  
They know our needs, and live by them, lending them wiles  
And beguilements we could never have fashioned for them;  
They carry the ends of our hungers out to drop them  
To wait swaying in a dark place we could never have chosen.  
By motions we have never learned they feed us.  
We lay wreaths on the sea when it has drowned them.

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