CHAPTER X

TRANSPORT TO SUMMER : CELEBRATION OF REALITY

Though Stevens placed "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" at the end of Transport to Summer, which was published in 1947, as a climactic finale to the entire book, the poem was written and first published separately in 1942. The poems that follow "Notes" are variations on its central propositions, with varying emphases, in some cases with pleasurable finality, as in "Chocorua to Its Neighbour" (CP, 296-302), Stevens' hymn to the central being of man, or in "Credences of Summer" (CP, 372-378), the celebration of a perfect accord with reality.

"Esthétique Du Mal" (CP, 313-326), perhaps the most ambitous poem in the book, and the least successful, takes up the question of evil in the widest sense of the term - the evil of suffering, of war, of death, of pain in any form - and locates the origin of evil in our inability to 'live' in the world: "The greatest poverty is not to live / In a physical world" (CP, 325). The cure of the mal that the poem proposes is not an evasion of pain or a wishing away of it, for "pain is human" (CP, 314), but

establishing a correct agreement with the external world, which is for Stevens the true poetic act.

The man in Naples in the first poem "writing letters home / And, between his letters, reading paragraphs / On the sublime" (CP, 313), watching the eruptions of Vesuvius from the glass window in his cafe, is Stevens' critique of the self that refuses to experience, and has only an objective, scholarly interest in pain. The contrast between the man sitting amidst roses in a "cool café" (CP, 314), waiting for lunch, and Vesuvius groaning for a month with "the sultriest fulgurations" (CP, 313) suggests his complete detachment from the actual terror of Vesuvius and his interest in it as strictly intellectual. This is indeed an ironical description of the sufferer of the mal who can only understand pain through the meditations of a book, the book on the sublime, Longinus' perhaps, which interprets for him the terror of the eruption, makes "sure of the most correct catastrophe" (CP, 314). For the scholar, Vesuvius is merely a metaphor of pain and has no reality of its own. He shrinks from feeling its terror. The "part of the sublime / From which we shrink" (CP, 314), the poem suggests, is to know that pain is human.

In a somewhat reverse situation in poem II, the man lying on his balcony at night is seen projecting his own pain on the outside world. The sounds of the night are so much a part of his mind, so much like the "syllables" of his "meditation" (CP, 314) that they cease to have any separate reality. Pain however,

cannot be resolved in the mind, but in the revelation of things free from the anthropomorphic projections of the self. The rising moon is such a revelation:

> The moon rose up as if it had escaped
> His meditation. It evaded his mind.
> It was part of a supremacy always
> Above him. The moon was always free from him,
> As night was free from him. (CP, 314)

It is this freedom, this supremacy of reality from the privative, subjective inflictions of the mind, reality seen not as a part of the mind but as something wholly other that "saves" us from our pain in the end, because the moment we cease to see acacias as a reflection of our despair, as if in a "hallunication," we begin to respond to their "yellow," their "scent" (CP, 315); we see them in their supremacy, and in their freedom and, in this discovery, pain is dissolved.

The projection of an anthropomorphic god, poem III suggests, "an over-human god," "A too, too human god" (CP, 315), leads only to self-pity and thus weakens us as it prevents us from accepting and living in the real world which is perhaps our only salvation:

> It seems
> As if the health of the world might be enough
>
> It seems as if the honey of the common summer
> Might be enough....
>
> As if pain, no longer satanic mimicry,
> Could be borne, as if we were sure to find our way.
> (CP, 315-316)

"Esthétique du Mal" reiterates the rejection of the logo-centraic self that fails to live in the real world and see the evil of suffering, of war, of death, in the right perspective, which is to see it as part of "the innocence of living" (CP, 322). The self is no longer seen as at "the centre of a diamond" (CP, 322). The "sentimentalist" with his "Livre de Toutes Sortes de Fleurs d'après Nature" (CP, 316) and his transcendental idealism is discarded. The mythology of the moon as "round effendi" or "phosphored sleep" (CP, 320), as projection of the subjective imagination, is destroyed. The "inventions of sorrow" and the nostalgia for the "damasked memory of the golden forms" (CP, 317) are despised. Instead, what is familiar and near, is accepted in poem V:

> Within what we permit,
> Within the actual, the warm, the near,
> So great a unity, that it is bliss,
> Ties us to those we love. For this familiar,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> these things disclosed,
> These nebulous brilliancies in the smallest look
> Of the being's deepest darling, we forge
> Lament. (CP, 317)

It is in the discovery of "nebulous brilliancies" in familiar things that pain is dissolved.

In its desire for a right accord with reality, the self rejects what is perhaps merely esthetic, "the mauve / Maman" (CP, 321) in poem X, the fantastic, "she-wolves / And forest

tigresses and women mixed / With the sea" (CP, 321) and seeks "the most grossly maternal," totally "unsubjugated" by the mind, so that return to reality is "a being born / Again in the savagest severity" (CP, 321). Accepting reality as a source of its being makes the self secure against the impersonal pain because it is no longer seen as her malice but as part of her gross, yet fertile, innocence. Thus

> That he might suffer or that
> He might die was the innocence of living, if life
> Itself was innocent. To say that it was
> Disentangled him from sleek ensolacings. (CP, 322)

This poem, in defining, and accepting, suffering as part of our being and living in the world looks forward to "Auroras of Autumn" (CP, 411-421), Stevens' most powerful expression of the experience of terror which is seen not as a "symbol of malice" but as part of the "innocence of the earth" (CP, 418). It is then, neither in the subjective self, the "unpeopled" world (CP, 323) nor in the objective world, the "peopled" world, that the pain is dissolved, but in "a third world"

> in which the will makes no
> Demands. It accepts whatever is as true,
> Including pain, which, otherwise, is false.
> In the third world, then, there is no pain. (CP, 323)

The parable of the yellow sun and the big bird pecking at it in poem VI, is one of the most fascinating and successful accounts of the interaction of reality and the self. There is a

perpetual temporal play in which "perfection" when achieved is rejected and this stimulates further "desire." The sun "dwells / In a consummate prime, yet still desires / A further consummation" (CP, 318). The cycle of the sun's day and the lunar month mark a "transmutation which, when seen, appears / To be askew" (CP, 318). Similarly, the big bird "pecks" at the sun to fulfil itself, to satisfy its "desire," but is stimulated by its divinations of perfections better than its present food; its desire for celestial perfection is seen as a curious lapse, a recurring discontent which further motivates its desire for the real, the yellow sun whose "mind is still immense, / Still promises perfections cast away." Its despair thus turns into desire. The bird refuses, like the sun, the contentment of the permanent, static, atemporal perfection, and is perpetually spurred on, through the apparent unattainability of the transcendent, toward a more insatiable desire for the real. Its divine discontent goads it toward a superior realization of the real.

"Esthetique du Mal" affirms and reiterates the need to live in the physical world, with all its evil and pain. And it is poetry which makes this world inhabitable for us:

> Natives of poverty, children of malheur
> The gaiety of language is our seigneur. (CP, 322)

Poetry is our lord, and can save us, not by evading the evil of the world and taking refuge in an imagined good, for the man "of

bitter appetite despises / A well-made scene in which paratroopers / Select adieux" (CP, 322), that is, he rejects unreal inventions of the world. Rather he accepts that "Life is a bitter aspic" and that "we are not / At the centre of a diamond" (CP, 322). It is only when he becomes aware of his real destitution, "divested of ... fountains" (CP, 321), of "damasked memory" (CP, 317) that he hears "a declaration, a primitive ecstasy, / Truth's favors sonorously exhibited" (CP, 321), the poetry of the affirmation of the real.

The final poem explains what it is to live in a physical world. It is not the physical by itself: "The adventurer / In humanity has not conceived of a race / Completely physical in a physical world" (CP, 325). It is to see "The green corn" gleaming and "the metaphysicals / Lie sprawling in majors of the August heat, / The rotund emotions" (CP, 325). It is the experience of the metaphysical in the physical, not beyond it in a "non-physical" paradise of "non-physical people" (CP, 325). The delight of such experience of the metaphysical in the physical, of radiant presence in actual, visible things, makes even the "non-physical people" envious who yearn to "experience / The minor of what we feel" (CP, 325). It is poetry that makes possible such experience, for all the ill we see and for all the "evil sound" (CP, 326) we hear. The poem ends with a celebration of "the metaphysical changes that occur / Merely in living as and where we live" (CP, 326). Poetry does not transform us into a

metaphysical realm, but transforms the very world in which we live in its rich presence.

"Esthétique du Mal," with all its affirmation of the physical world and poetry's power in helping us to live in that world remains one of the most contrived poems. Its fifteen verses are disconnected in tone and manner, and lack the normal pace of Stevens' greater poems. Stevens seems to have been tempted to try out his own esthetic of the mal, perhaps after Baudelaire, or more because of the closer realities of the world war, but the poem lacks the force that seems to have generally inspired his best work.

The belief in the gaiety of language as our seigneur, in poetry's power to dis-cover the real world in its rich presence is the central theme of many poems of Transport to Summer. "Motive for Metaphor" (CP, 288) speaks of the imaginative act that is rooted in change and shrinks from the confrontation with the absolute, changeless, unknown X. The motive for metaphor, or creative act, the poem tells us, is to experience things in their living changingness and to feel the exhilaration of such an experience. The poem describes two scenes, one of autumn, another of spring. Both are equally pleasurable and the perceiving self does not inquire into the "meaning" in the sound of the autumnal wind or look for fuller expressions in the "half colors of quarter-things" of the spring. What the imagina-

tive perception tends to find is not a "structure of ideas" but the "structure / Of things" (CP, 327) and experience the mystery of the ever-renewing reality. In autumn, for instance, "everything is half dead," everything is in the process of change that is never quite complete. Similarly, spring is described in the midst of its many changes, "The slightly brighter sky," the clouds melting, a single bird suddenly appearing on the scene, the obscure moon. An imaginative perceiving is that which enables us to feel the joy of experiencing things in their perpetual change and not abstracting them into "the weight of.... / The A B C of being / ... the sharp flash, / The vital, arrogant, fatal dominant X," the abstract, unreal, unknown transcendence.

The metaphoric act, then, is not an act of abstracting things from their temporality into a mental conceptualisation but an act of perception of the real. As "Crude Foyer" (CP, 305) puts it, "Thought is false happiness." The idea

> That there lies at the end of thought
> A foyer of the spirit in a landscape
> Of the mind.
>
> . . . . . .
> In which we sit and breathe
>
> An innocence of an absolute,

the idea that in the landscape of the mind we find an absolute is false happiness,

> since we know that we use
> Only the eye as faculty, that the mind
> Is the eye, and that this landscape of the mind

> Is a landscape only of the eye; and that
> We are ignorant men incapable
> Of the least, minor, vital metaphor, content,
> At last, there, when it turns out to be here. (CP, 305)

The poem shows the futility of conceiving of the absolute in the atemporal space of the mind whereas actually it is to be discovered "here," in the actual world. A metaphoric act is seeing things as they are, in their true being. "The least, minor, vital metaphor" dis-closes the visible and the tangible in its plenitude and not "the vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X" (CP, 288). Metaphor, or creative act, is thus redefined in its function of an ontological disclosure of things and not as a transformation of the real into abstract ideality. A similar statement occurs in "The Red Fern" (CP, 365):

> Infant, it is enough in life
> To speak of what you see. But wait
> Until sight wakens the sleepy eye
> And pierces the physical fix of things.

The poem describes what it is to see the sun in its being. The rays of the sun at rising shoot in the sky and scatter into distant clouds, and in these manifestations of light one discovers "The dazzling, bulging, brightest core, / The furiously burning father-fire...."

"To accept the structure / Of things as the structure of ideas" (CP, 327) is the central proposition of the poems of Transport to Summer, and the tendency to turn things into ideas

of the mind is repeatedly criticized, as in "The Prejudice Against the Past" (CP, 368-369), in which the pedants turn such simple things as "cart" and "hat" into anthropomorphic projections "of themselves" (CP, 369). The children live and play in harmony with the immediate things whereas the pedants turn them into "the relics of the mind," dead images of the self. Similarly "So-and-so Reclining on Her Couch" (CP, 295-296) rejects the symbolic conception of a woman in a painting, who "floats in air," "completely anonymous." "She is half who made her" and "The arrangement contains the desire of / The artist." One rejects the painting because the woman in it has no identity of her own, but remains a mere projection of the artist's subjective desire. But "one confides in what has no / Concealed creator. One walks easily / The unpainted shore, accepts the world / As anything but the idea or image of it, and the poem, in a final gesture, names the figure and in naming her as "Mrs. Pappadopoulos" turns her into a real woman.

"Thinking of a Relation Between the Images of Metaphors" (CP, 356-357) beautifully illustrates what a creative experience at its most essential involves. The poem opens with the description of real things in a real setting: "The wood-doves are singing along the Perkiomen. / The bass lie deep, still afraid of the Indians." The fisherman who is apparently all attention for the bass, turns with equal concentration to the song of the wood-doves which, then, sounds as "a single song." In the same way he

"is one eye" and sees that "the dove resembles the dove." In his perception he sees the dove as dove, as it in its essence is. And though he has insight into the essence of the dove, though he sees one dove and hears one sound "coo," he is also aware of the variations of the central sound, "rou-coo, rou-coo," that is, of many real doves singing their individual songs close to the central sound. Their song is different yet identical. The fisherman's experience thus states "the unstated theme" in its "disclosure," that is, he dis-covers the being of the dove in the variations of individual doves. He strikes a perfect relationship between the "images" of doves singing and the "metaphor" or, the creative experience of the essence of the dove. In his eye "the dove / Might spring to sight and yet remain a dove," it might be both an image of the dove and the metaphor of the dove, an actual dove and the essence of the dove. Each image, each variation, is different from the "unstated theme," the essence of the dove, and yet is identical with it. In the Heideggerian parlance, being is not identical with be-ing, yet it appropriates itself only in be-ing. It is this vital relationship between being and be-ing that the creative act brings into existence.

The creative act, then, does not involve defining "the un-stated theme" but in discovering it in its variations. Speech, says another poem, "The Creations of Sound" (CP, 310-311) "is not dirty silence / Clarified. It is silence made still dirtier. / It is more than an imitation for the ear." Words do not speak or

"clarify" what perhaps never can be spoken, the "silence,", but "make the visible a little hard / To see" so that we may discover the unspoken in them. We do not project meanings into words, we do not express ourselves in words. A man, a poet, the "X" of the poem, who uses words as an expression of himself "is an obstruction, a man / Too exactly himself," not aware that "there are words, / Better without an author, without a poet, / Or having a separate author, a different poet." This separate poet says himself "in syllables that rise / From the floor, rising in speech (he does) not speak." He does not use words to give meaning to the silence, rather he "says" so that in his saying the silence may appear, manifest itself in his words.

Poetry, then, lets things appear in their true being. Things have no existence without poetry. "There is no life except in the word of it" (CP, 287). Poetry is "A sound producing the things that are spoken" (CP, 287). The things that the sound produces, the world that the words create, is not, however, a private, subjective world, but the world which is already there, the world of real, actual things which lies nonexistent but for the words. "Holiday in Reality" (CP, 312-313) illustrates this:

> Spring is umbilical or else it is not spring.
> Spring is the truth of spring or nothing, a waste, a fake.
>
> These trees and their argentines, their dark-spiced
> branches,
> Grow out of the spirit or they are fantastic dust.
> . . . . . .

These are real only if I make them so.

. . . . . .

And I taste at the root of the tongue the unreal of what is real. (CP, 313)

The poetic act involves an experience of the discovery of the "unreal" not beyond or behind, but in the "real." The world that the words create is neither a naturalistic reproduction of the external objects, nor an idealistic, subjective creation of them in the mind, but the existential world, in its ontological plenitude, for instance, spring in "the truth of spring," in its being.

"Description Without Place" (CP, 339-346) is Stevens' major statement of the theory of poetry, the / "theory of the word for those / For whom the word is the making of the world" (CP, 345). As Stevens said of the poem, "we live in the description of a place and not in the place itself" (L, 494), or, "the power of literature is that in describing the world it creates what it describes. Those things that are not described do not exist" so that a creative act is "really putting together a world" (L, 495). The poem illustrates how in description things or place come to be. There is first the actual seeming or description, "the way / Things look each day, each morning," - as "the sun is something seeming and it is" (CP, 339). This is actual perception, "The lesser seeming original in the blind / Forward of the eye that, in its backward, sees / The greater seeming of the major mind" (CP, 340). Except for this major seeming of the mind,

the "delicate clinkings not explained," "In flat appearance we should be and be" (CP, 340). Except for the creative perception and description, things remain a mere set of objects, concealed and nonexistent for us. A whole nation, a world, an era is created, gets its identity when described by a powerful mind: "Things are as they seemed to Calvin or to Anne / Of England, to Pablo Neruda in Ceylon, / To Nietzche in Basel, to Lenin by a lake" (CP, 341-342). The most potential description is one in which

> There might be, too, a change immenser than
> A poet's metaphors in which being would
>
> Come true. (CP, 341)

Description, then, is the revelation of the being of things:

> Description is revelation. It is not
> The thing described, nor false facsimile.
>
> It is an artificial thing that exists,
> In its own seeming, plainly visible,
>
> Yet not too closely the double of our lives. (CP, 344)

The creative act is not a mere copy of things, not a "false facsimile." Description is not an exact reproduction of things. It is "an artificial thing" that transforms the "actual" into its "intenser" presence. It is in this sense that description and revelation, poetry and reality are one.

"Thus the theory of description matters most" (CP, 345),

the poem concludes, because description makes possible a world in which we live. The world that the words create, however, is not an abstract, transcendent, imagined reality, but the temporal, primordial world which is always there but remains closed to us until we discover it through an imaginative act. There never is a world except the one established by words. Like the woman at Key West who created a world as the horizon of her being, like the man with the blue guitar who lived as "a native in this world" (CP, 180), the Spaniard in this poem creates a world, and in creating it truly discovers it:

> the hard hidalgo
> Lives in the mountainous character of his speech;
>
> And in that mountainous mirror Spain acquires
> The knowledge of Spain and of the hidalgo's hat. (CP, 345)

Stevens' most powerful presentation of the man of imagination appears in "Chocorua to Its Neighbor" (CP, 297-302). There are other poems, such as "Paisant Chronicle" (CP, 334-335) and "Sketch of the Ultimate Politician" (CP, 335-336) which also describe the major man. In the former he is described as the character "beyond / Reality, composed thereof... / The fictive man created out of men" (CP, 335), a man composed beyond our usual notion of humanism, a man in his essential being, and yet an actual human being who "may be seated in / A café.... / ... It must be so" (CP, 335). In its hauntingly meditative manner, "Chocorua to Its Neighbor" celebrates this central being of man.

The poem is in the form of an utterance of a mountain, Chocorua, who speaks of this "self of selves" (CP, 297) to its neighbour. Perhaps it requires a mountain to speak of "the human mountain" (CP, 300), to recognize a presence as large as its own. The human figure resting at the end of the night, on the mountain, in the light of a "crystal-pointed star" (CP, 296), is first seen and described as"this prodigious shadow" (CP, 297), seen thus in the night's light more as a presence than a thing present:

> He was a shell of dark blue glass, or ice,
> Or air collected in a deep essay,
> Or light embodied, or almost, a flash
> On more than muscular shoulders, arms and chest,
> Blue's last transparence as it turned to black,
>
> The glitter of a being. (CP, 297)

He is seen

> as tall as a tree in the middle of
> The night. The substance of his body seemed
> Both substance and non-substance, luminous flesh
> Or shapely fire. (CP, 297)

His being is composed of the whole of the external world, "the whole / Experience of night" (CP, 298) in which he sits and meditates, "as if he breathed / A consciousness from solitude, inhaled / A freedom" (CP, 298). In such "moments of enlargement" (CP, 298)his being, his "central mind" (CP, 298) is disclosed to him and he hears "the motions of the spirit" (CP, 298) whose sound becomes a voice which is his own voice speaking.

The poem thus is a meditation on the radiant being of a man, a giant man, himself meditating on his central being.

The radiance of his being, however, is not an external element. "He was more than an external majesty" (CP, 299). He is not a great figure to be followed, "not the thinker" (CP, 299) that men would look up to as their hero or their saviour, but the "power," the "thought," the "image" (CP, 299), of the essential radiance of being that they would recognize as their own. He is thus "the collective being" (CP, 299), not an exceptional giant, and there are others like him, the captain, the cardinal, the mother, the soldier, "Blue friends in shadows, rich conspirators, / Confiders and comforters and lofty kin" (CP, 300).

There is nothing mysterious or mystical about the shadow on the mountain. Nothing "more than human" (CP, 300) is involved in his experience of his being, or the mountain's recognition of it. The shadow is not an abstraction but "A human thing" (CP, 300), a shadow that will "disappear / With the special things of night" (CP, 300) when day comes, and yet remain as "bare brother" (CP, 300), a "common self" a man of "glubbal glub" (CP, 301), a human being,

> Physical if the eye is quick enough,
> So that, where he was, there is an enkindling, where
> He is, the air changes and grows fresh to breathe.
> (CP, 301)

His very be-ing, his existing in his essence, creates an atmosphere, a space around him, which, if we are able, we breathe like strength and live in the largeness of his being:

> The air changes, creates and re-creates, like strength,
> And to breathe is a fulfilling of desire,
> A clearing, a detecting, a completing,
> A largeness lived and not conceived, a space
> That is an instant nature, brilliantly. (CP, 301)

"Chocorua to Its Neighbor" is Stevens' tribute to the essential, authentic man, who is a being-in-the-world and yet lives in the light of being.

If "Chocorua to Its Neighbour" is Stevens' celebration of man as he is in his authentic being, "Credences of Summer" (CP, 372-378) is, as Kermode has rightly observed a great poem, celebratory of the moment of total summer.[1] The poem is a celebration of the fullness of summer, of the rich fecundity of the splendours of the earth. The poem is Stevens' strongest affirmation of the experience of things as they are and an equally violent plea against transforming them into metaphysical ideality. The "metaphysical" or the essence, the poem insists, must not exist apart from the "physical" or the existent, it must not be separated from the real but must be "found" or discovered in the real.

The poem, as the title suggests, is the song of a believer in summer, who is firmly rooted in the summer landscape and speaks of it with buoyancy and confidence. It is a perfect

August day of harvest at Oley, unique because of its ripeness, "green's green apogee" (CP, 373) which can attain no more. The poem begins with an insistence on its perfection: "This is the last day of a certain year / Beyond which there is nothing left of time" (CP, 372). The first canto fixes attention on "this day" which is here and "now" (CP, 372) and demands that we see it with concentration in its inexhaustible plenitude forgetting all that is not part of it. The completeness of the present day is emphasised in a manner typical of Stevens, through the negatives: "There is nothing more inscribed nor thought nor felt" (CP, 372). Imagination has nothing more to add. What is, is itself the "imagination's life" (CP, 372). Bloom fails to see this insistence on the rich and fertile fullness of things and finds the celebration "thwarted by its eloquence of mere nature which resists being reimagined."[2] In fact, the poem affirms most powerfully that things must not be reduced to images but must be experienced in their rich presence. Everything is contained in the present actual moment and there is no need to imagine anything beyond it but only to discover the real in its abounding fullness.

The next poem, therefore, asserts that it is imperative that we see things themselves and not desire them to be otherwise:

> Postpone the anatomy of summer, as
> The physical pine, the metaphysical pine.
> Let's see the very thing and nothing else.
> Let's see it with the hottest fire of sight.
> Burn everything not part of it to ash.

> Trace the gold sun about the whitened sky
> Without evasion by a single metaphor.
> Look at it in its essential barrenness
> . . . . . .
> This is the barrenness
> Of the fertile thing that can attain no more. (CP, 373)

The essential barrenness of the sun is, paradoxically, the barrenness of its essence, its centre when it is seen without the trappings of our metaphysical and metaphorical conceptions, so that it can be seen in itself, in its fullness or "fertility." Helen Vendler detects an elegiac tone in the negative terms and in the paradox of the final line.[3] The negatives, however, seem to be used to stress the need to see the things themselves and nothing beyond them. Oley is

> A land too ripe for enigmas, too serene.
> There the distant fails the clairvoyant eye. (CP, 374)

The actual, the present, seen in its ripeness, its fullness, leaves no room for any enigma; it is so complete in itself that it requires no clairvoyance for a fuller vision. The choirs of summer are heard "not with secondary sounds," they are "Not evocations" of something else, "With nothing else compounded," They are "full," "last," "utmost" (CP, 374) sounds which are accepted as good and complete in themselves.

Having discredited in the first four poems the tendency to evade the real, the tendency of the imagination to separate the metaphysical from the physical, to turn the actual and the temporal into a symbolic static ideality, and having insisted on the need to perceive the actual and

present in its rich plenitude, poems VI and VII describe what such a perception of the real involves. Poem VI begins with a note of finality as it affirms the need to see the mountain in its completeness: "The rock cannot be broken. It is the truth" (CP, 375). It cannot be separated into the physical rock, the metaphysical rock. The rock is perhaps Stevens' most powerful image of reality that is essentially something mysterious and self-concealing, something wholly other, which cannot be broken into our conceptions of it. It is the earth which is our ground and on which we dwell. Thus the rock

is not

> A hermit's truth nor symbol in hermitage.
> It is the visible rock, the audible,
> The brilliant mercy of a sure repose,
> On this present ground, the vividest repose,
> Things certain sustaining us in certainty. (CP, 375)

The perception of the rock of summer, rising from land and sea and covering them, in its green's apogee, and then in the light of the sun, its luminous top dissolving in the air, "A mountain luminous half way in bloom / And then half way in the extremest light," (CP, 375) is the perception of the visible-invisible rock in which nothing is transformed, "Yet we are shaken" by it (CP, 401) as if it were.

The task of the imagination, then, is to reveal things in their entirety, in their visible invisibleness, and not break it into the mental categories of form and matter, actual

and ideal, temporal and transcendent and so on. The difficultest rigour, the next poem says, is "to sing in face / Of the object" (CP, 376). The poem juxtaposes two ways of singing. The "unreal songs" of the anonymous "they" "Far in the woods" (CP, 376), not grounded in the "here" and "now" of the present moment (this is the only description in the whole poem in the past tense), fail to get the thing in its entirety. The singers found it "difficult to sing in face / Of the object / The singers had to avert themselves / Or else avert the object" (CP, 376). It was difficult because either they perceived it as a naturalistic object which excluded their imaginative perception of it, or they saw it in its ideal form in which case the actual object itself was lost. They sang of it either as purely physical, or as purely metaphhysical, both of which were "unreal" songs. Juxtaposed to their songs is the "savage" struggle of gripping the object, "this hard prize" (CP, 376) in its totality:

> Three times the concentred self takes hold, three times
> The thrice concentred self, having possessed
>
> The object, grips it in savage scrutiny,
> Once to make captive, once to subjugate
> Or yield to subjugation, once to proclaim
> The meaning of the capture, this hard prize,
> Fully made, fully apparent, fully found. (CP, 376)

It is with a fierce concentration that the object is possessed in a threefold process: once "to make captive" so that it is

"fully apparent," that is, fully visible; once "to subjugate / Or yield to subjugation" so that it is "fully found" or revealed; and once to "proclaim the meaning of the capture" when it is "fully made" into the poet's song. The object is finally gripped, "this hard prize," in the simultaneity of seeing which is showing which is saying. This is very close to Heidegger's definition of Logos as "saying which, in showing, lets beings appear in their 'it is'."[4] The 'making' thus coincides with manifesting, creation with revelation. This is perhaps the most complete and satisfying articulation of Stevens' belief in the identity of poetry and reality.

The remaining three poems of "Credences of Summer" are songs of summer. They are poems of reality. In VIII the trumpet of the morning announces the day, the visible. But the visible is not announced as if in a photographic reproduction. Rather it is described as "the successor of the invisible" (CP, 376), and the "mind grown venerable in the unreal" (CP, 377) detects the invisible in the visible. The song of the day, the song of the real, is thus the song of discovering the invisible in the visible.

If the eyes are full of the ripeness of summer, one eye still discovers summer in "an abandoned spot" (CP, 377) as the cock watches, from the vantage point of a bean pole, while its breast reddens in the light of summer, a deserted and desolate motionless scene of a garden turned into weeds. The

old complex of experience and perception of the real in its fullness having changed, the bird "detect(s) / Another complex of other emotions... / ... and (it) make(s) a sound, / Which is not part of the listener's own sense" (CP, 377), a song of reality, independent of human meaning.

The final poem recapitulates the song of the "personae of summer" (CP, 377), the visible manifestations of the invisible "inhuman author" (CP, 377), the being of summer, as they wear its mottled finery, bulging beyond control and reveal the fullness of summer. They

> speak because they want
> To speak, the fat, the roseate characters,
> Free, for a moment, from malice and sudden cry,
> Complete in a completed scene, speaking
> Their parts as in a youthful happiness. (CP, 378)

The credence of summer is ultimately the song of summer; the belief in reality is the poem of reality, it is the "making" of what is visible, but the making that is also revealing, so that the hard prize of the real is possessed simultaneously as "fully made, fully apparent, fully found" (CP, 376).

The poems of Transport to Summer focus on the central proposition of Stevens' poetics that poetry and reality are one. Poetry, as these poems show, is essentially revelatory and the poetic transformation a recognition of things in their plenitude. They celebrate the revelation of human reality that the creation of a work of art makes possible.