



Nine Figures on a Hill
(after sculptures by Barbara Hepworth)

Texts by Margaret Morgan



Ultimate Form

I said, 'Ye are gods!' John X 35

At the moment of the Fall, Adam
knew himself different by aeons
from the womb that bore him.

At the moment of the Fall, Adam,
in some primeval pool mirrored,
saw but one likeness, himself,

in the image of his maker.
How otherwise? But he
was that man who,

having seen his reflection,
goes his way and forgets
what he has seen,

leaving us to seek traces,
wherever we can find them,
of the kingdom in ourselves.



Ancestor 2

I hear you, Grandmother,
Telling me to take it
And eat it and
get on with it
And lie on the bed I have made.

I hear you, Grandmother,
telling of bare-footed
poverty, drunkenness, leaving
in a boat for a hard city.

I hear you, Grandmother,
saying that once life was heaven,
the farm was fertile
and God smiled every Sunday.

I hear you Grandmother.
Men are fools, babies,
cunning, swine, strong
and need keeping down

as your grandmother told,
and hers told her, and hers,
right back to Eden.
I hear you, Eve



Ancestor 1

You look straight at my belly.
You smile from your treasury of quirky
eyebrows and ears. Someone
will ask where he got those from,

and why some days he yearns for the sea
and others is drunk on the smell of turned soil
and yet another day can't get enough
of the morning reek of cities,

the smoke and fresh bread,
markets, perfume and sweat.
And one day maybe a sharp
pectoral pain, or bloody urine,

or lungs declining the air
and singing a swan song
convince him you passed on
the seed of his particular dying.



Parent 1

You are the fascination
of hillside and cave
whose features grow clearer
to the gazing child.

Your arms are wide
above your hips.
They open on a well
of perpetual nurturing.

Your head is your sanctuary,
hidden in towering cliffs
seen from the tide line
when I climbed from the waves.

And, as I walk to you,
through you, past you,
you dwindle to a little child
tottering towards the witch's cottage.



Parent 2

I rise from the land
slim and erect as a tree,
an alder, whippy, a seed-bearer,
piercing soil, sky and cloud.

In certain currents of air
my breath is whipped away
by your tender looks
as you take hold of my hand.

I swing you into my arms
to show you vistas new to you,
slopes vertiginously green.
I bend beneath your weight

as you examine me, in the convex
raindrops that deck my leaves,
for images of yourself, until
I feel you see my exposed crown.



Youth

I can see the horizon through your eye.
I see winter and summer in equal measure.
You are the sum of lines stretched
to all possible opposites.

Asleep you are a marionette
lodged in the curl of a shoulder.
Your latencies lie bare, links
of a chain of power carelessly dropped.

You are either asleep or running.
Love at this time sits hollow
in the elision of flesh and bone.
Your eye frames a different world.



Young Girl

You are a carriage
trim, smooth and polished,
with a pert driver
perched in front.

Living in your own world,
body and spirit as one,
you go your own way.
Why do you suddenly stop?

You are the twin bulbs
of an egg-timer
gradually coming
to understand each other.

There is joy in your neck,
round and firm as a fruit
whose flavours are below
in its juices.



Bride

She looks at him, her hand
in the in the nook of his elbow.
Who is he, this groomed

Stranger, once her friend?
Sweet peas and gypsophilia tremble
in her small ringed, hand.

Identified by rings,
all her migrations noted.
She smiles at him,

And waits for empty
beaches where sun lights
laughter and love

and pulls about them
wells, caves, hollows
and doorways of their marriage.



Bridegroom

He looks at the world
hands by his side,
hers through the crook of his arm.

The door of home is behind him.
Doors, or, perhaps, no doors,
will open. Doors

into gardens of bliss
or from the circle of companions
perhaps, as it turns out.

He leans a little towards her
but smiles out at us,
not yet the intimacy

of eyes meeting and holding
before our harnessed smiles
as we wave from our inner doors.