

Liesl Schillinger

### HIM: 1987-1991

*"It's the big affair I cannot forget.  
Only man I ever think of with regret."  
—from You Can't Take That Away from Me*

#### VALEDICTION

Although I know I only make you ripe  
For another woman's harvesting,  
I am glad in this:  
I have tasted your first blush.

And in our umbered evenings,  
When we first probed each other's shadows,  
Defining them in light,  
I enmeshed myself  
In the course  
Of your new growth.

So when someday I will see  
Another possessed of you, my apple tree,  
I will not mourn you as one dead, but  
Rejoice in knowing  
The shelter she finds  
Was part built by me.

The gingered essences she will lick from your skin  
Will be mine too, intermingled.  
For I have melded myself to you,  
And you, unknowing, knowing, bent to me.

And we are of the same flesh, and redolence.  
And we are of the same tree.

—1987

#### A WOMAN CUTS HER HAIR

The hair that I grew  
while I knew you  
is gone.

Short skirts, black boots,  
feigned indolence  
put aside.

My books, my thoughts,  
my writing,  
reassumed.

My gin and tonic  
still  
are by my side.

I wish I could cut off  
the love  
that grew

While I was linked  
unluckily  
to you.

—1989

#### Resistance

I led you to wine and you wouldn't drink  
I led you to light, and you wouldn't see,  
I led you to thought and you wouldn't think,  
I led you to love; you forgot me.

Went back to your small beer,  
Went back to your dull bawds,  
Went back to your low gear  
Went back to your non-Gods.

And yet, how I want you,  
And yet, how you haunt me—  
And yet, how your hoodoo  
And yet seems to taunt me.

—1990

#### Ressentiment

J'écris un roman sur toi—  
Et je veux que tu le saches.  
Et tout ce qui te tâche  
Je retrouverai et éclairerai.

Tu brilleras de *ma* lumière,  
Derrière—tes ombres surtout,  
Illuminées par mon dégoût,  
Apparaîtront dans leur misère.

Mon doute de ta simple valeur,  
Ma haine de tes basses qualités

Y seront nettement découpés;  
Offrandes à ton malheur.

—1990

*[And, in an ex-post-facto preamble...a song from right before HIM]*

#### Walking Down the Street

In the book of my life  
You won't fill a page  
A line or two is all that you will get.  
So fiction lover, find another  
Young mystery—

Now that this one's dead.

In the book of my life  
You won't fill a page  
A line or two is all that you will get  
And that'll just be how I found  
You weren't what I'd thought  
And how I wish we'd never met.

I always forget,  
All they want is a dream  
A hard thing to be,  
When you're walking down the street,  
With his arm in your arm,  
And the ground beneath your feet,  
Walking down the street.

In the book of my life,  
You won't fill a page  
A line or two is all that you will get  
So fiction lover, find another  
Young fantasy,  
And get yourself into a new one's bed.

I always forget,  
Once they leave, they don't come back.  
I guess it's time for me to face the facts.  
Now you're gone,  
You're gone for good,  
And you won't be round,  
My neighborhood,  
But that's OK, 'cause I don't live there anymore.

*(Higher)*

I always forget,  
All they want is a dream,  
A hard thing to be when you're  
Walking down the street,  
With your feet on the ground,  
And his arm in your arm,  
And you're telling yourself, baby,  
'I'll never come to harm,  
With his arm in my arm,  
And the ground beneath my feet,  
Walking down the street.'