

# At the San Francisco Airport

*To my daughter, 1954*

This is the terminal: the light  
Gives perfect vision, false and hard;  
The metal glitters, deep and bright.  
Great planes are waiting in the yard—  
They are already in the night.

And you are here beside me, small,  
Contained and fragile, and intent  
On things that I but half recall—  
Yet going whither you are bent.  
I am the past, and that is all.

But you and I in part are one:  
The frightened brain, the nervous will,  
The knowledge of what must be done,  
The passion to acquire the skill  
To face that which you dare not shun.

The rain of matter upon sense  
Destroys me momentarily. The score:  
There comes what will come. The expense  
Is what one thought, and something more—  
One's being and intelligence.

This is the terminal, the break.  
Beyond this point, on lines of air,  
You take the way that you must take;  
And I remain in light and stare—  
In light, and nothing else, awake.