Lares / Manes
Also by Billy Mills

Genesis and Home
Triple Helix
Letters from Barcelona
Five Easy Pieces
The Properties of Stone
Tiny Pieces
A Small Book of Songs
What is a Mountain?
Logical Fallacies
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In memory of my mother, Dee Mills, 1932–2008
GENESIS AND HOME
(1979–1985)
“. . . thou didst not enquire their meaning nor their cause. Hadst thou done so, the King would have been restored to his health and his dominion in peace. Whereas from henceforth he will have to endure battles and conflicts and his knights will perish, and wives will be widowed, and maidens will be left portionless, and all this because of thee.”

from the *Peredur Ap Evrawc*
1. it is no easy task to measure the distance
   in twin parts which were to procreate,
   the two effects compensate exactly

2. the egg of the world:
   sowing by night and cultivating by day,
   before gestation was complete

3. the building of the second sanctuary:
   a little shaky when you get up towards
   the speed of light

4. that the universe is uniform
   is a sign of the coming of water

5. who measured the spectra of galaxies;
   who was androgynous

6. the argument is mildly mathematical,
   our universe is so transparent

7. imagine a large cube of rubber,
   a universe in motion

8. “a dark cold place full of bright objects”

9. local knowledge of the past
Follow the Makers’ Instructions

1. open
   carefully
   (the well oiled surface
   facilitating entry)

   avoid
   stretching and straining,
   unnecessary damage.

   this, you may find,
   prolongs the sensation

2. unroll a little
   leave empty spaces

   it doesn’t have to be
   an interruption

   the handlers identity
   is unimportant

3. do not scratch!

   this
   guarantees protection

4. beware
   of parthenogenesis

   use only once;
   a single seed
   can cause fertility
Genesis Two

1. their great riches for offerings: 
   the mountains and the seas

2. for the performance of rites: 
   the uncertainty in the observational determination

3. distance is roughly linear 
   observed in visible light

4. physically conceivable structures— 
   the reed and forest for the work of building

5. a variation of more than a hundred 
   regular patches of light

6. a certain magic density
three hens around the door
a cast iron stove
that never really works
quite as it should
a tilly hissing light into the room

the near successful crops
of aubergines and maize
pulses and grains
bought eighty miles away
a compost heap
the unused hands on tools
inchoate web of feelings
summoned up
by field tree mist and stream:
cos in a patchwork frame
Genesis Three

1. the spectrum of sunlight,
   before the beginning of the earth

2. in an evolving universe

3. the mountain had been shaped,
   to the sea its limit—
   the great distances implied

4. we look in their direction and it is dark
Garlic

because
of its virtue/
this pungency’s
your perfume

a poor mans treacle
its oil
is sulphurous/volatile
but delicate
when gently simmered

I crush a clove
into what soon will be
today’s shared meal
Genesis Four

1. details of the process were quite unknown,  
a natural consequence of the high temperatures

2. in slightly different form;  
   variable light is unknown,  
   subject to laws

3. has power over all things,  
   composed as a sure foundation

4. candidates for association  
   in a rich soil

5. “often in error, never in doubt”
To Make Elderberry Wine

in September gather
the bunches of purplish-black berries
strip from the stalks
with a fork
(this will stain
your fingers)
crush and add boiling water (a gallon
to 3 pounds of fruit)
cool
and add yeast:
after 3 days strain
onto sugar
ferment in a dark jar