

What Word Would Keep You Then, My Friend?

Like smooth bamboo the word
Extends and bends our eye into
The darkness on a new terrain
And what is loss is gain.

The dogs are here. They rise
Like captains come to life
And greet us formally, with some reserve,
O see the bending bamboo swerve . . .

If you or I could find some shade
Or even darkness here beyond
The parallel where words dissolve
Where cannons shudder and the song
Betrays a memory of home,
If all our search were done
And time were closer to the end—

What word would keep you then
My friend, from looking back
Or else from turning quite alone
To garrison your fortress built on sand?

—*Joachim Plummer, O.P.*