IM BUNTEN ERDENTRAUM

*Durch all Töne tönet
*Im bunten Erdenraum
*Ein leiser Ton gezogen
*Für den, der Heimlich lauschet.

*(Through all the notes
*In earth's many-coloured dream
*There sounds one soft long-drawn note
*For the one who listens in secret.)*

*(Schumann’s Preface to ‘Fantasia in C Minor’)*

Do not wonder that impassioned men
have been impelled to kneel upon muddy shores
honouring this earth with lips impress.
Yes, meet and right such gestures now and then.

At end of many a faded summer when
thin weeds wave at edge of fallow fields,
children, scenting reviving earth, run in the rain.
Yes, meet and right such gestures now and then.

That dusty cemetery and the new grave open;
and to the fresh earth-mound advancing
with rustle of footfall, pallbearers and mourners.
Yes, meet and right such gestures now and then.

Snouting the dust, his boots will span
boundaries of self-appointed lands;
and stumbling, find earth has measure of its men.
Yes, meet and right such gestures now and then. 1999