

And I begin to fear they never will.
All they maintain the path for is the comfort
Of visiting with the equally bewildered.
Nearer in plight their neighbors are than distance.

SMOKE.

I am the guardian wraith of starlit smoke
That leans out this and that way from their chimney.
I will not have their happiness despaired of.

MIST.

No one – not I – would give them up for lost
Simply because they don't know where they are.
I am the damper counterpart of smoke,
That gives off from a garden ground at night
But lifts no higher than a garden grows.
I cotton to their landscape. That's who I am.
I am no further from their fate than you are.

SMOKE.

They must by now have learned the native tongue.
Why don't they ask the Red Man where they are?

MIST.

They often do, and none the wiser for it.
So do they also ask philosophers
Who come to look in on them from the pulpit.
They will ask anyone there is to ask –
In the fond faith accumulated fact
Will of itself take fire and light the world up.
Learning has been a part of their religion.