

Glass

By A. R. Ammons

The song
sparrow puts all his
saying
into one
repeated song:
what

variations, subtleties
he manages,
to encompass denser
meanings, I'm
too coarse
to catch: it's

one song, an over-reach
from which
all possibilities,
like filaments,
depend:
killing,

nesting, dying,
sun or cloud,
figure up
and become
song—simple, hard:
removed.

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The wonderfully varied poetry of A. R. Ammons reflects his lifelong interest in science; landscapes, animals, biological processes, and even the weather typically provide the raw materials for his philosophical meditations. An heir of the American transcendentalists Emerson and Thoreau, who

sought in nature clues to an ultimate metaphysical reality, he also has affinities with Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams. A self-deprecating, countrified humor marks both his short, personal lyrics and experimental longer poems. One longer poem, *Tape for the Turn of the Year*, was written entirely on adding-machine tape.