

SERIES #22 (WHITE)

Oil and gesso on canvas Robert Ryman, 2004

I.

As if it were still the 17th century, when *conscious* just entered the English language, meaning secret and shameful:

2.

the whitewash of brushstrokes over black. *It was like erasing to put white over it*, Ryman says, but gives no hint of what—

3.

everything we have words for is dead.
No wonder, Nietzsche said, I forget; so it repeats, like a series

4.

of couplets: In Hebrew *darkness* is not unrelated to *childlessness*.
Being 47, unmarried, without children and in love with men who
don't commit,

5.

is not a choice. It's a compulsion. Last night I dreamt that I was
a little girl,
dressed in white, running behind a boy, down a dirt road,

6.

searching for a home, and because we couldn't tell which was best we stopped at any house. It was owned by a blind man.

7.

In *Jane Eyre*, it is after Rochester is blinded in a fire that burns his house to the ground that he is finally free to marry Jane. And in the paintings,

8.

what is present is what matters. And what is present is not white paint, but paint that reflects white,

9.

a lightwave, a stream of minute packets of energy photons.