

**An Apology for Stealing the Rhymes from Hayden Carruth's Poem, *An Apology for Using the Word 'Heart' in Too Many Poems***

I first fell in love with her name driving to Portland  
shy to present her unawares and defining naked  
excess. My bouquets are only color and space plus a few  
less eye contacts. In other days we were charmed by  
sentimental garlands painted, etched upon each  
lentil and plinth. Each copy of Finnegans Wake to  
muscle its way past Security praised this  
hustle, this svelte and scrumptious abode.  
It's the place to stop for scones and coffee. It  
fits into each wild rumor of the last October days  
without the petty sugars to alter the taste of English  
stout. Remember? Paris? The cats? We were all so  
cold, so ready for the dying fire and November's  
boldness to come spilling from the larder  
white and quiet to mimic mimes juggling  
light. Once again the choice: Chocolate or vanilla?  
Wonder which I chose? Neither. In the distance:  
thunder, the end of time, feral cats, excuses,  
abuses each reminded us of our sundry fragile  
uses and duties assigned by the gods, delicate,  
indispensable. Remember the choices made in the dark?  
Defensible? To be sure. Scones and black coffee,  
worse each time we stop. So we stop the witless,  
perverse subscriptions to *Field and Stream* or *Archery*;  
covers always showing Adonis and all your former  
lovers tearing up Ibiza or Mykonos. Emptying what was  
fullest before leaving a two drachma tip for our god,  
dullest of the fabled clowns. Showing he cares,  
locating our heart's desire, meanwhile we loiter shyly  
awaiting a Gothic typeface, perhaps a photo of Cary Grant  
given for a flavor of the month. Meeting the same Russians  
driven to these warrens to await the next war where much  
isn't as one supposed. Isn't soft or made of taffy. Doesn't  
present trouble, rather silence, the cat in Paris  
said, The time had come; leave while it's golden before his  
head was laid upon the altar awash in chrysanthemums.

## **Doppelgänger**

Sometimes early in the morning  
as I stare out my window  
administering a cup of French roast,  
almost ready to witness what life has strewn  
about the avenues while I slept,  
I'll remember that weekend  
at the Holiday Inn in Topeka.  
Our lives would have been very different  
if others had known.  
A little domestic chaos  
to cut through the depression,  
to medicate with this or that,  
whatever harmful substance was at hand.  
But I'm not really there.  
That part of me that once was  
now lives near Tampa  
and we haven't spoken in years.

## Home Bound

So you're sitting around the casa  
looking at the turkey TV dinner  
that is going to be  
this year's Thanksgiving's centerpiece.  
You've made the thousand-piece puzzle  
of the Taj Mahal three times now  
and each time another piece is missing.  
They tell the gullible by Easter  
everything will be back to normal.  
Well, Sparky, Try this:  
Turn out the lights,  
put on the headphones  
This might be the year you meant to take off  
and really get to know Bach.  
Next year you can buy the harpsichord.

## **It was fall**

in the first year of the plague  
Alice had never liked being called *Sugar*.  
It reminded her of her mother  
and all mothers scatter around the planet,  
cooking rice, darning Argyle socks  
or, like Alice barreling the F-35  
under the Golden Gate bridge  
at five hundred knots.  
On her instrument panel  
just below the arming switch for the ejector seat  
she's taped your baby picture.  
Over the Pacific now, 10,000 feet  
banking over the Point Reyes light.  
*No pottage tonight.* she thinks.