

## **THE KISS IN THE MARKETPLACE**

### **LE BAISER DU TRATTOIR**

She is unmoved; her arms are at attention, even as she embraces. This is a falsehood. An artifice of money-making passion created to sell an image of a war-ravaged city regaining life.

In cafes, thinkers sat and expressed little surprise; all life was after all meaningless, haphazard collisions that made no sense. Slowly, light drained from the city. All was grey. Fog reclaimed the streets. The broken hurried to their apartments.

She reached up and drew him to her lips. His hands plunged to her waist and they began to sway together.

## **FUNERAL**

Far away, the bugle's thin notes  
carry across the expanse of a sky blue  
March day.

Far above, in our hilltop cemetery  
another son is returned to dust.

A time to pause, a time to remove hats,  
bow heads.

A time for words, the movements of condolence,  
the furled flags of regret and comradeship.

A tractor ploughs another furrow in the field next door.

## **THE HONEYMOON'S OVER**

We pointed the prow of our coupe north  
along a rolling hill road in the dark; sunsets  
went, and the road was all our headlights  
showed until the small towns, gas stations  
and superstores.

These places became oases, from  
dark that lay  
beyond their perimeters.

A darkness we  
navigate together  
to come home.

## **DEATH**

Death laid a hand of smoke  
upon my shoulder; it passed  
right through. Somehow, my arm  
felt more substantial than before.

Like the blast of a northern gale  
in a winter that, hitherto, had been  
unseasonably warm. I had forgotten  
what death felt like.

For it was said, "The old die and the  
young give birth." Yet the young are  
cut down and withered trees,  
all wood and empty branches,  
rule the land.

Where, then, is my hope?

## ELEGY FOR MORTY

You should not depart in silence,  
anonymity or the whispers of  
relatives in a hospital corridor.

But you should go like the blaze  
of a rocket launched; the sky should  
turn blue at night like when the power  
transformer blew in New York City.

A voice is departed.

Coldness rises, where your words  
once warmed us.

Now, their heat is gone;  
I shall shiver in the snow.