

I

The sentence in its entirety. Panoramically,  
when the poem refused to confess its false  
stanzas, the giddiness of a young butterfly landed—  
extended its wings to stretch. As if a sign of wanted desire.

II

Painful nectar — this delicate smile. Or  
obvious statements. Words conjure up the lips  
to mannequins. They stare out 5th Avenue windows  
all day. Wearing the same expression  
and masks. Real love  
dripping from their fingertips.

III

Taut. As an emergency stop cable. All the disasters  
of bed sheets halted in simple  
little breaths. A night stand  
some alarm clocks,  
the viaduct lonely at each passing car  
was a process so full of itself.  
Rome was built to become useless.  
Let us build an automobile and not drive it.

#### IV

Persephone bathed in aqueducts at this point.

Her skimpy bikini was sure to do her in.

A letter from her lover bled to death. Late at night  
the tears smeared each other jealously. Several  
telegrams sent themselves to her aide. They read:

BEGIN.stop THE BEGIN.stop

#### V

The beach was easy prey for these minnows

Disguised as poetry. Young couples played,  
splashed at the necessity

of love. They skipped stones and counted secretly —  
on secret fingers. The abacus crawled out of its shell  
and demanded answers. The young couples had none. They emptied  
their breath in one lump sum:

“We are in love. Please go away.”

The abacus retreated, its own mouth full  
Of humility and drowning in waves.

## VI

One by one our sayings  
crushed little boy's hearts. Oh weep.  
Oh weep weep. All over Chicago the Loop  
streets chased prostitutes and tourists. The essential  
trauma of English lured all the Frenchmen to a park bench.  
Hands translated love all night.  
Grant Park and Lake Park chilled champagne tongues.  
Unknown immigrants took photographs.  
Everything was speaking its own language.  
We as axskin yous a question.  
The question was no  
thing.

## VII

Opened doors. All kinds  
of liquor stores vacated this part of town.  
Civic leaders met, erected a small plaque. At night  
the plaque released desperate pleas.  
"free me from this spot. Torture me vandals.  
I will love you more than your mothers did."  
Certain admonitions visited the plaque at 4AM.  
They disguised themselves as parking meters. All night Taxi  
drivers and poets fed the meters. A steady course  
of discourse and inter  
course. The Art of Arguments was perfected at that moment.  
Even the poem ghosts locked their ghost doors, afraid  
language might enter their hollow sockets and form eyes.

## VIII

The eyes have it. During the Primary,  
even at the Iowa strawpoll, everyone loved seeing  
them. Opposition protesters held placards reading,  
“Why don’t you choose me?” The Democrats froze  
the assets of all who held a pen. At the same time  
Germany was seeking reparations from Volkswagen.  
The polls stayed opened through many time zones.

Votes came in  
three or four hours apart. Just long enough  
to hold back the weeping.

Again the eyes had it.

## VIV

Of all sad sins, poems still address you.  
In Prairieville, the healing waters of natural  
Springs could not prevent unhappiness. The town became popular  
with poets. L.S. Bradshaw wrote his masterpiece  
after downing a whole liter.  
The first line began, “Oh tainted love, I chose you.”

## X

At first, reality was just surrealism — only not as pretty.  
It started when Jesus changed water into wine.  
The disciples thought, “Oh shit, this is it. We’re doomed.”  
But the world did not  
end. It got drunk. Aristotle had a theory  
of changing water into bourbon.  
Frank, the bartender at Axels, had the same idea  
years later. When Bukowski came in one day  
and threw shot glasses at the mirrors, language  
held its breath. The English Dept. held its breath.  
It’s been holding it ever since. Surrealism can’t  
pass out. Unconscious, lonely. What would the rest  
of us do?

## XI

The first stanza drove through 100 degrees heat.  
Sped through the Bypass of Eisenhower. Landscape  
painting invented a moving horizon  
and suddenly the blurred image of our wings  
was noticeable. Stop the world. Who’ll stop our hearts?  
Tomorrow a mocking bird will sing.  
And if that mocking bird don’t sing,  
I’ll buy a diamond ring.  
Such bedtime lullabies could not have put the poem  
to sleep. No gentle rocking or mobile either.  
A locket containing love’s humility, it wears  
itself well around necks. Like a noose.



## XII

Lips went dry.  
The paste color of skin, a virgin.  
The imminent tidal wave  
goodbye, a ghost. The message in the bottle:  
Kurt Buam's voice. Or the bartender's.  
They were all sent to Thompson Correction Facility.  
When God sent love to Man, love got the wrong address.  
(Moses parted bar stools, that was how we got here.)  
A tulip bloomed just as Man broke his heart in words.  
The rumors of cave poems were true. The Historians dated  
one another based on a line found in France:  
"I'm hungry, cold. Poets don't suffer from this, they die."

## XIII

In Germany, desolate pilgrims read poems  
to their crops. This was before Classical music. The crops grew  
tired of their roots. "We want to go to a land Over the Rhine."  
Farmers sold their children and followed  
the wakes of boats to Cincinnati. The Germans invented the first  
good idea.  
And destroyed it. All within 30 years.  
A church of literature held Mass  
that evening. At the height of its sermon  
women prayed and sang Leifbeslieds.  
Their voices said to us, "I want to go everywhere  
with you."

#### XIV

Geography is no-where. That leaves the architect  
so un-alone, so uncompromised. A returnable undulation  
exists, a poetic wave of Aloha.

The magic surrealist waves his wand, a school  
of fish appear. The sum of their knowledge  
forms a pre-school. Single moms write letters  
to Congressmen. Asking for forgiveness. All the day care  
in the world can't prevent the lust of night's arms.

We feel caresses while asleep; that is poetry's  
dirty work.

#### XV

It's not that he doesn't clean  
up well, it's just he dirties so fast.

So said Man about fellow Man,  
Ginsberg said Williams was just talking. Those are just pillows  
talking. Art is about Buttons, Andersch said,  
in 1945. Meanwhile our pale mother goes on  
breathing post war poems. When she exhales,  
new countries form. When she unifies us,  
it's merely a sigh.