

John Newlove / IT IS A CITY

Jewelly plastic shining in the machine's remove,
painful ladies striding in antimony, o
in the weeds the wet sod of war clotted
lies with pickerel eyes, with pickerel eyes
and a pike's glossy brown lungs gulping watery air —

it is a city in the muck of sharp mud,
life's stinging black slime
warm against ankles as they rise and fall,
while on the naked shoulder-blades
casual insects auction death away —

a city! Filled with sodden books,
beautiful girls with jewelly hips, filled
with admiring fishy smiles and miles
of coppery machines, enemies dead
or with bad teeth, preposterous dreams
of what had been and familiar schemes:

o Shining creation, when will you die
among the fishbones and the plastic weeds,
and let me lie?