

## *Messenger*

Perhaps I've gone on long enough so far  
but I'm a willing subject who savors  
a threesome, some trinity, you say, a wind  
trio culled from the local conservatory,  
a triplex topped by a nest of defunct  
wiring, a three-legged dog. So,  
I was daring to say  
when hastily I halted,  
I had pulled to a three-way stop, my throat in my heart,  
when a small tractor rammed me from behind  
into a Harley, whose rider parachuted  
through my moonroof into my  
sticky glass-encrusted lap  
with force to make me new.  
Does that ring false?—It's false-false-true.  
For truly, on an August afternoon much like today  
in 1994 I arrived on Second Avenue from far-off parts  
in my man-child's suit at the very moment  
a bicycling messenger came upon a stopped-short taxi  
and missiled through its rear windshield.  
At least his head did. The rest was meat  
on the hot ground and a passenger with a goring  
stain in his midsection who washed the  
pavement with tears and vomit.  
There was no man to hold.  
I stood in place beneath the flashing sun  
and turned away and turned watching  
and stood turning and here you find me  
staring you down across the meridian  
having given up all  
permanence to speech.  
Listener, onlooker, dim-starred crypto-pornographer, I  
cannot hide from what I witnessed that day  
in my throat and mind and in my hot  
vestigial self.