

In the back row someone is holding
a garbage can cover behind a woman's

head. We are making progress. See?
Most of us are showing you

the insides of our hands.

Robert L. McRoberts

DESERTIONS

I have deserted the causes
of my dreams.
The men I adore have perished.
The women
open their blouses and air
falls out, plump and empty.

I have deserted the music
of my friends;
dark notes, fantasies.
I have taken my destiny
out of their soft hands.

All my country, its vast lakes
of despair, its mountains,
equal to a single pebble
in my shoe, a dampness beneath
the sun's perception.

A man passes me on the street.
His face is like my father's;
strong and old:
A sycamore by a white stream—

And I desert him; even as I pass
I am deserting him, leaf by leaf,
each light branch, vanishing.