

FATHER

The long lines of diesels
groan toward evening
carrying off the breath
of the living.
The face of your house
is black,
it is your face, black
and fire bombed
in the first street wars,
a black tooth planted in the earth
of Michigan
and bearing nothing,
and the earth is black
sick on used oils.

Did you look for me in that house
behind the sofa
where I had to be?
in the basement where the shirts
yellowed on hangers?
in the bedroom
where a woman lay her face
on a locked chest?
I waited
at windows the rain streaked
and no one told me.

I found you later
face torn
from *The History of Siege*,
eyes turned to a public wall
and gone
before I turned back, mouth
in mine and gone.
I found you whole
toward the autumn of my 43rd year
in this chair beside

a mason jar of dried zinnias
and I turned away.

I find you
in these tears, few,
useless and here at last.

Don't come back.