

on her legs and eyes, a tongue with rungs  
to the red grass she stares down, *my mother?*  
to a knife? And the last one standing like a heave,  
flat to the wind, a poor board face,

shoulders slumped as if loaded with horseshoes? *All,*  
*me?* Why is the room empty, and the dredges at the Ash  
gone to their afternoon pastries? I'm alone again

at the marble foot, a softness in my fingers  
moist over his cold arch, up and around the toes  
searching again through bone for an influence, again  
for the hot, unlimited blood of supply.

### GRAVITATIONAL MASSES IN THE DREAM WAY

Here the weather has just broken. Rain  
detailing the leaves across the sidewalk,

ledger pages softening to meal with the spread  
of gasoline in the open street. I'm in a boat

built by Chagall; it is red  
like the dress of the winter wedding guest

or the chairs facing Lear in the stone theatre  
fifty feet below. Chagall himself is standing

on the corner waiting for the light, the effulgent center  
to change. A netted sack of firm garden vegetables

hangs over his shoulder, green and yellow peppers  
impinging, two drops of milk, one on each eyelid

trickling down to the bones in his cheeks. I want to kiss him  
but the clouds are shifting and the hands behind

the hospital doors, rouge-noir, are pulling him through . . .  
There's the odor of curry and creosote static

on the wind, gold and black cellophane  
wrappings around my eyes. We see through an open suitcase

at the bare feet of the painter who has resurfaced  
into the months away from his portrait of a cow,

and from the side of the cow on the butcher's hook.  
We see more subtle inbred tricks of light

in the room of the world where I have docked.  
I am stepping out into thin air, into the first

breath of mid-life I'll take like his hand  
that squeezes, then lightens, and disappears.