

outside Brindisi. Ah, the stricken soul,  
he sat till midnight waiting for a girl  
who never came. I love his *sense*, he knew  
where the ludicrous lay, he hated  
quackery. I wonder  
if maybe in the palace he had seen  
a bromeliad once and touched the drooping flower—  
the rubbery claws; I wonder if he talked  
to a passing fox about the frogs that lived  
in those leaves, if he had exchanged some wisdom, how  
it only eats air, how it clings to palm trees; I wonder  
if March twenty-first was when the plum tree bloomed  
in Tivoli, if he had also seen  
hundreds of butterflies in those branches, if he  
lay down and wept—in spite of his careful mind—  
if that is the third suspension, the third abandonment.

### THREE HEARTS

A chicken with three hearts, that is a vanished  
breed, a day of glory in the corn,  
romance against a fence. It was the sunset  
just above New Egypt that made me wince,  
it was the hay blown up from Lakewood. God  
of chance, how much I loved you in those days,  
how free I felt and what a joy it was  
sitting there with my book, my two knees braced  
against the dashboard. How empty it was then,  
and how my mind went back. How many hearts  
did the chickadee have? How much whistling and singing  
was in those fields? How far did I have to go  
to disappear in those grasses, to pick those trillium?