

THE POEM AS A PRIVATE PERSECUTOR

Despair, the poem says to its victim,
was what you wanted from the start.
You wanted the toy, the cloth animal
you'd fondled from childhood to turn
real. You wanted a real lover now
who could enter you live and lash
your blood till your haven of bone
shattered to fragments.

And of course, the poem pontificates,
you found her. She was there
when you looked. (I helped you look.)
Destiny, poem wagging a finger, is **nothing**
but what your whole life asks for.

Go straight to hell, thinks the victim,
and turns a bare back to the poem
though not so abruptly as to risk **whipping**.

THE POEM OUT ON A NIGHT MISSION

He stands in the abrupt night
of her door, the poem standing
beside him, anxious. With erect
fist he pounds at her wooden
body. Open up, you bitch,
my love, damn you, open
yourself up, you sweet bitch.
(What language for a lover,
grumbles the poem, shivering.)

I've become all instrument,
I'm my only weapon, I've made
myself all key to push myself
whole into your lock, I'll make
you all lock, I'll unlock you.

Faintly the door swings
from its frame (like thighs
spreading, the poem thinks,
remembering her bed the day before).

I have a guest. Won't you come in
and meet him? Slowly he enters
her body with the other man.
The blood of his fist sinks.

Love is a telephone receiver
wrenched off its hook, it drains
drop by drop into an all-night
busy signal.

The poem

disappears behind everything.
Gathering the light of half-moon
and a few stars into its mind
it creates the city end to end.

Across the street there's a weighty matron
looks out her window. What a beautiful
night, she almost whispers, troubled
by an old magic. Of course it's beautiful,
the poem says, but who can know,
if I don't, what it's made of?