

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.)