

## Provisional · *Reginald Shepherd*

The prospect seen as false: the listening  
breeze a fountain echoes, the puckered lips  
of poppies planted in rows three deep  
to set a boundary. And then this calm.  
(I leaned against worked granite  
of philanthropy, watched passersby flicker  
as on a screen. I was a momentary flaw  
in one Monday's flow to another  
office Monday, a lapse in the week's  
work.) This thrush says surrender  
sorrow, his song a small aggression  
taken for joy. Soon I will repent  
one early regret, not to have heard  
his first cry take the day. (The male bird  
claims the branch he clutches in his claws,  
and thinks he owns the scene.) Today  
what can be asked for can be had,  
late sleep in a fall of sunlight  
through closed blinds, and then the sound  
of water arching with no consequence,  
the leisure of an aimless walk.  
(The men who own this afternoon  
make sense of Sunday cities, their parks  
strung like a noose around the margin,  
crabtrees with their inedible burdens  
stationed along the paths. Money  
like late spring forces everything  
into flower.) Here I am falling  
asleep with just this life, my spendthrift  
days given away willingly, the bruised  
and fallen apples only fruit.