

A few hours after the roosting  
an assortment of dry goods men,  
grocers, and sheriff's deputies  
loaded their sons' pellet rifles

and before morning the dead  
would be gathered.

And before a year had passed  
the pigeons were back,  
neither fewer, nor wiser;  
maybe even the same pigeons.

And everything below  
began to acquire the same patina,  
the same splatterings and leavings of love,  
spilling over the cornices  
and acanthus leaves, the awnings  
and facades; the same pigeons,  
the same grey-white frosting  
we killed them the first time for.

### THE WOMAN ON THE ROAD FROM KAMARI

I could never walk like that, never  
tighten my scarf with such finality,  
or wear such a constant shawl  
of darkness. I could never  
tap my cane like a clock  
along the cobbles, or learn  
to separate the herbs of downfall  
from the everlasting ones.  
I can only say *good morning*  
and *good evening* in Greek.  
In between them, the gulls  
swing and lapse into the surf,

the sand backslides and rattles.  
I could never learn to distinguish  
between the true breast  
of the local goddess,  
and all the ordinary stones  
scattered over the mountain.  
And although the woman's eyes  
are lifted briefly  
from the same deep pool  
as my own,  
I could never summon the nerve  
to walk like that, body bent  
into the world's oldest question,  
carried up the mountain,  
death after death.

### INITIATION, 1965

Because a boy must murder something,  
because a boy must be implicated,  
we were shooting the doves  
with a pattern of shot as wide  
and heartless as the hand of God,  
because one of us would be sent to war  
in a country he couldn't find on the map,  
because one of us would stay alive  
by a series of academic maneuvers,  
because one of us would remember  
how the wind flapped through the blades  
of milo, how we baited the field,  
crouched in the dirt of the roadside.

You have to lead a dove, you have  
to aim for the next move he makes,  
which is a move into nothing,  
which is a shattering of iridescent