

## *Liebestod* / Gwen Head

*Suggested by a promotional film for the French Mirage III fighter*

X marks the spot. The girl  
spread-eagled on the beach, oiled and glistening  
in her bikini, breasts  
hard handfuls like grenades. Beside her blanket  
a revolver and a transistor radio.

The pilot can't believe his luck, swoops low,  
the surf tickling his wing tips,  
and scoops up the sight again like a greedy pelican.

She sits up to watch him gone.  
A fine haze of mica veils her sunburn.  
Her hair stands out straight like a windsock.  
She doesn't wave, but her sunglasses  
dazzle and burn like phosphorus.

So at the top  
of the steep loop back to her, he flips  
his canopy away like a champagne glass,  
ejects,  
and hits the beach, legs pumping  
as he hurdles strand after strand of barbed wire,  
racing to reach her in time  
to salute, take off his pants, and yell  
"A votre service, ma'm'selle!"  
as his jilted plane goes up like a bunch of roses.

The earth does in fact move for this conjunction.  
A tide of mortars rolls in  
and a hot heavy rain picks out their movements  
like an expert knife thrower.  
Far off, the alert missiles quiver  
in their hardened silos, and the red telephones  
croon to each other like bowerbirds. Over the black  
waves, clouds of bombers dip and sway  
damp-winged, the false eyes on their wings  
blindly flirting.

Here at last  
is love to set the world on fire.