

AFTER CHAMBER MUSIC

(Una serata musicale alla Villa Fabbricotti)

In a summer's garden long ago,
(lute cradled by a handsome youth)
young girls gathered all aglow
wanting to sing to their hearts' loves there
in this villa garden; the flow
of floral life frozen in frescoed art
(even terracotta of the Duomo)
all in a Tuscan summer's blaze of light.
And we, stumbled out into night
on this winter evening, in topcoats, scarves
around our throats held tight,
inhaling, exhaling the same crisp air
as had trembled there in flute's slight
shaft; as had sprung from well-bowed strings,
as had made clear harmonies in flight
through that throng in the frescoed room.

Fog crept up from the city's womb
in narrow streets and sculpted squares,
from Arno's dark, past tower and tomb;
its whiteness touched our faces, lit
by the moon's risen burning bloom
and met our outward breathing steam;
so down we went in garden's gloom
by step and stair with that music's air.

Though still the late trains clashed below
our faces coursed with blood alight
and music wove us in its loom.

ON THE PIETÀ OF MICHELANGELO

(Basilica di San Pietro)

Milk for some is a thing blessed:
parting lips, you know it's right.
Wide-eyed you spy moving leaf
cooly blow in the wind. 'Cool
leaf,' You think, 'in world so wide.