

ELEGY FOR A POET DYING IN MERRY APRIL

Gray clouds satisfied the day's busride debating,
and gave the command for bloated turtle backs to waddle down
sidewalk channels.

Pitifully bizarre, they bobbed as a crazy stream of
green, red, blue, black scalloped shells.

Hobble, hobble. Dribble, dribble.

It breathed, drawing and exhaling them at shop doors and windows.
At an intersection they jostled into one another and stalled,
springing away suddenly from back to front when the cars no
longer passed.

Toward their end one man ran, unshelled,
not there when they stopped but drawing to them as they stretched
away.

As he fled across the black, glossy back of the street, a heavy,
speeding car,

its windshield wipers blinking a wide stare,
flicked him like a cigarette butt to the back of the group he
was pursuing.

As if the stiff body were spinning a cobweb of them,
the hunched shells gathered quickly around it.

Huddle, huddle. Driddle, driddle.

They nodded from right to left, froze, and burrowed out.

Hobble, hobble. Dribble, dribble.

—EDW. RIEDINGER