

This Morning

This morning an Italian eight-year old
With a British accent
Walked to school singing.
He was not a normal eight-year old.

Launching stones off a polished shoe.
He scuffed the sidewalk
Like little gentlemen were forbidden to do
Behind the brick walls
Of the Catholic parochial school.

Distantly grass danced free
In a field while the crickets
Played Mozart's fortieth symphony
(which they composed),
And feeling drawn toward this unbroken
Virgin frontier,
He removed those refined shoes
And socks
And scrambled off the pavement.

Ran for his life he ran
Propelled by the pressure
From the pavement sucked in
By new discovery he fell
Uncontrollably before himself
While the whirling blades
Of grass the trees the shrubs the yellow
blur
Of dandelions ran just as fast
In the opposite direction.

But
The end of breath
And innocence
Stopped him in his tracks
While a tense leaf with its veins showing
Crouched hideously and desperately
Over a few pieces of grass
As if shielding them
From the shadow of his footstep.

The Sicilian schoolboy watched
His clear conscience drip
gently
Into the muddied puddles at his feet,
And paralyzed by afterthought stood
Perfectly crooked for balance.
One step more
Would upset the balance.