

The Triumph of General Washington

I was quite drunk, but lucidly rolled
Barrel-like out of a bar
Into a puddle; spattered with cold,
Startled a passing car

As I crossed to the Public Gardens where
The mirrored swan boat's swans
Were resting from children and motion and day,
While somewhere sound trickled on,

Water stippling the summer night
Like beery suds on the sea,
When General Washington loomed in my sight,
The Garden's stale trustee,

Confronting elegant Newbury Street
And the narcissistic shops
In a martial coat of muted green
Like a mounted traffic cop,

And I jeered: "The cavalry is old hat,
Come off your high horse, George,
It's time to feed on the nation's fat,
Not freeze at Valley Forge,"

And, backing off to salute, I jarred
The mirrored swans in the drink:
The water unrippled to glass again,
The stone of my malice sank,

I faced the moon like a glistening seal
As that globe unveiled in the sky,
And the General, still on his pedestal,
Rose high and mighty, and dry.

-- David Leviten

Boston, Mass.