The Postures of Love

1.
The simple thing of love
is that it grows
unwanted and unaided
like a weed.

Or root it out or trample it,
love flourishes and chokes
the ordered and domestic,
the pretty bourgeois bloom.

So let it thrive
until the winter wind
withers the stem.
then though we die of it,
the weed will grow again.

2.
So let the moment breathe,
for this is all we have.
(Eternity died long ago.)
Our time is like a hollow shell
compounding noise from silence.

So let it breathe,
as it will breathe again
if so it must,
but let the windy passion
wind about the heart for now alone.

Let's tread the giant acres,
repair the little stars,
till breath collapses
and the moment ends.
3. Love cannot be withdrawn
or placed in escrow
and survive: it is a tree
whose roots hold deep
and bruise or fail
at the transplanting.

Water it with tears
of grief or joy, dejection
or desire; like dogwood
vandal, snap off the blossom,
but leave the soil intact.

Let its fruit fall
to the wind and rot
but do not bare
its submerged heart.

Love then will flourish
when the spring takes hold,
drawing its beauty
from familiar clay.

4. Such old pride as we have
is proof against the wind
but useless when the needles
of despair probe to the marrow.

Why then stand upright to the gale,
why hold head high, why face
the grim necessities of hope?

Throw pride into a corner
like a hunter's coat, still
salt with pain, still wet
with longing, cold of joy.

Beyond the edge of time,
despair, despair of love,
wants ready with a knife.

5. How like a torrent dreams
return when winter ends.

And each remembered
instant like a wave
rocks our stability,
dousing a hope.

What tenderness we knew
rises a wraith from flood
and mist, pointing
a foggy accusation.

How like a struck note
dreams remain in spring
and settle on the heart;
how like a dying thing.

RALPH DE TOLEDANO