

## **Gleaning**

Over the floating fuchsia mountains  
above the gimlet eye of the sun's  
first coldfire orange instant

broken lines of cranes head south  
to glean the frozen stubble fields  
an hour or two before they head back

up valley gabbling to themselves  
and anyone else under the sun  
now blindingly white who will listen.

Better never to have been born at all  
more than one of the ancients said  
but poor as I am, of little faith

I have my doubts, even of that.  
Conceived in a fit of passion, born  
in another, whatever tokens

might have been sent or brought or placed  
ignored in the agonizing heat  
of our coming screaming and crying

beating fists into this light,  
blood and excrement anointing  
our urgent impressionable heads

yet much as we hate the truth of pain  
hunger and death we come to discover  
love and meaning close to the bone

a homely world of real beauty  
we can't deny a music that sometimes  
like magic makes the labor almost

bearable, fruitful beyond  
the fond illusion the desperate hope  
the abject surrender to utter despair.