

GEOGRAPHY IS DESTINY

The potato-faced man listens too hard
to a woodpecker somewhere in the yard
as it drums some jazz in a big walnut.
Empty-handed, he stands ready to move
at a moment's notice, faded, dated
as a checkered suit with his jumpy grin.
He shakes a wire fence between the property
line roughly back and forth over its frame.
Next door, in a sheer chaos of sound,
the March wind blows down funeral laurels
on the fresh graves in the cemetery.
Jets overhead remind him of angels,
furious angels rupturing the air,
spewing forth a gold splay like headlights,
and he thinks irony leads us nowhere.
But lately he doesn't really believe
a word of what he thinks, or says, or does.
He only knows that he is twenty miles
outside the bleak city of Odessa,
is slumping, rounded down with gravity.
His puffy eyes squint as he squeezes lime
into a longnecked beer and takes a swig
until he finds himself picturing again
the ceiling of the world clustered with mobs
of angels sprawled across it like bar drunks,
and he wants to clamor for some purpose
fixed hard to his place in the chorus of time.