

Luncheon in South Garden of the Art Institute of Chicago

I lunch among strangers gathered to the sound of splashing,
collapsing water spears not quite
drowning the sirens, motors on Michigan Avenue.

Prone upon the pool edge, arm over eyes,
a barefoot secretary rests before return to work.

Matching her across the water, a tee-shirted construction worker lies,
yellow helmet domed on chest,
clasped hands behind head.

We rest in mottled shadows of dwarf trees bearing orange berries.

Shafts of water topped by smooth knobs shatter
as they fall, splashing.

One vainly seeks to touch a reaching bough.

Wind aids, pressing down the branch,
but pushes too the water spout
-scattering spray away from the branch.

No kiss but near miss.

The secretary sits up, slips on her sandals and strolls away.

In the breeze, smooth liquid tops flow to glass tresses;
soldiers, spears, dissolve to fleeing
heroines, dripping naiads bending,
diving to the bubbles below.

Pivoting on his butt, the worker plants his feet,
swings helmet onto head and saunters off.

Wary sparrows alight carefully among the thorny branches overhead,
Bold pigeons with rainbow necks and shoulders
click along the pebbled walk seeking crumbs.