

Effects

On my one visit to your bijou apartment—
 Glass, wood, neutral tones—you went on
 And on about important places you'd lived in
 Then hushed the room to listen
 To a bitter night in pre-war Berlin

When snow unmapped streets
 Outside a hall bright with human heat
 Where an orchestra played Mozart
 And a choir sight-read sheets
 That gave the text a fresh start,

“Hic in terra” for “in Jerusalem”,
 “Deus in coelis” for “Deus in Sion”.
 Through the static, the boys' voices sound divine
 And the crowd listen as if *Requiem*
 Were made with their night in mind.

You refilled our glasses and whispered
 In my ear. As the announcer declared
 “That was...” you flicked on your CD,
Epic Effects, first up a yowling Arctic wind
 Rushed up my spine, then cold

Wincing rain, a thunderstorm that
 Set me a-bristle like a cat
 And your pièce de résistance, an at-
 Om bomb that I hear yet,
 All jangle and unnatural collapse

With stringed seconds of nothing
Then the whole bone china tea-cup asunder,
A swinging door creaking open.
What night could go further?
I said my piece, not that you'd hear anything,

And I walked home, in the rain and wind,
Wondering at what exact point
The day becomes night
In a landscape like that, like this, light
Disappearing from what's still left behind.