

2

At an airport again. A man with one leg  
too short hastens past. "International airports,  
you know, have lost their magic for me."  
He coughed. A trick rhetoric, as his airports,

his lungs, were working perfectly. The poem  
Paul loved most at the time I was in Iowa,  
was written by a Hungarian Poet, Gyorgy Somlyo.  
About a heart attack. Its short first line

followed by a repetitive recount of  
tubes and attachments, turning it into a perfect  
portrait of an emotional seizure. It was years,  
years before Paul's heart refused to transport

his oxygen any further. An evil spell  
that struck him at an O'Hare news stand: his body  
wouldn't obey this smile anymore; his mind  
waved at him — "Bye daddy!"; his legs folding,

"Poetry" and "Time" dropping from his hands.  
Did he die before he paid for them  
or after, I wonder? I grin and realise  
it's Paul's grin. And grief.

And buy my paper.

## DREAMS

German, so his accent was worse than guttural  
when he declaimed: "Oh, Illinois, how this state  
would benefit from the invention of the tree!"  
His arms flew wider even than his paunch, his smile  
stretched further than the over-stretched horizon.

A classicist, passionate about Hellenistic Egypt,  
mummified crocodiles his speciality. The papyrus  
in which they were wrapped, netted more information  
than the cut-up material round monkeys and dogs.  
"Mostly, it's village tax-accounts we find. Boring,

I admit. But sometimes we strike, poetry." His  
explanations became so lengthy even the night  
watchman tried to avoid him. And still so much  
remained unsaid. Outside, he would stare at  
his boots, nosing the Mid-western snow. Tell them

of his hopes. Oh, to find poems, wilder than Sappho's.  
Written by some bilious clerk (or his wife).  
To find verses scratched in the margins of some endless  
accounts. From burning love to embarrassing problems  
with the stool; comments on politics laced

with acerbic reflections on glory. Powerful lines, and  
in pure Attic Greek; a clerk (or his wife) inventing trees  
on the plains of Lower Egypt. An academic shouldn't  
stay too long in the open. Sometimes his wife found  
him mumbling as if he was quoting them already.

