

Michael Sharkey

SEGMENTS FROM "SILENCE"

Poem dedicated to Kevin Ireland

Silence of a Popular Republic

The curious police inspect the petals
From a long lakeside pavilion:
Bees in place, and each attentive,
Like the men who dust the blooms.
Yellow cranes tread lotus leaves,
And honeymooners pedal boats
Past soundless tourists pacing paths
Laid out like zodiacs.

Silence of an Ideal World

In Plato's paradise
Of paederastic fops,
Throstles that do not acclaim
The state
Are rendered dumb.

Silence of a Public Gathering

When the flames burned low
In the public square,
And the beer was drunk,
And the crowd dispersed,
The word went round
That whatever was burned
Was not a man,
And the Judge concurred
That the crowd was right:
There hadn't been a man in sight.

