Music Maybe

Too many elegies elevating sadness
to a kind of sad religion:

one wants in the end just once to befriend
one’s own loneliness,

to make of the ache of inwardness—

something,

music maybe,

or even just believing in it,
and summer,

and the long room alone
where the child

chances on a bee
banging against the glass

like an attack of happiness.
From a Window

Incurable and unbelieving
in any truth but the truth of grieving,

I saw a tree inside a tree
rise kaleidoscopically

as if the leaves had livelier ghosts.
I pressed my face as close
to the pane as I could get
to watch that fitful, fluent spirit

that seemed a single being undefined
or countless beings of one mind

haul its strange cohesion
beyond the limits of my vision

over the house heavenwards.
Of course I knew those leaves were birds.

Of course that old tree stood
exactly as it had and would

(but why should it seem fuller now?)
and though a man’s mind might endow

even a tree with some excess
of life to which a man seems witness,

that life is not the life of men.
And that is where the joy came in.
When the Time’s Toxins

When the time’s toxins
have seeped into every cell

and like a salted plot
from which all rain, all green, are gone

I and life are leached
of meaning

somehow a seed
of belief

sprouts the instant
I acknowledge it:

little weedy hardy would-be
greenness

tugged upward
by light

while deep within
roots like talons

are taking hold again
of this our only earth.
It is Good to Sit Even a Rotting Body

For W.S. DiPiero

It is good to sit even a rotting body
in sunlight uncompromised
by God, or lack of God,

to see the bee beyond
all the plundered flowers
air-stagger toward you

and like a delicate helicopter
hover above your knee
until it finds you to be

not sweet but at least
not flinching, its hair-legs
on the hair of your leg

silvering
a coolness through you
like a soul of nerve.