

## A Poem for Miranda

Your words bubble through warm air  
and burst on my ear  
—but softly—I am come  
neither to prove you voluble nor dumb

Hear how the buzz-bomb fly betrays  
through the obscuring haze  
everywhere his progress, fumbling  
through hoarded silence with a tedious bumbling

(Each morning one walks over my face  
as if to disgrace  
my drowsing reluctance  
to get up and assume heroic stance)

By midday echoes congregate  
to dissipate  
under a parasol  
the fuzz that forms round conversation's lull

I swat at flies over a glass  
of tea. You may pass  
whatever notes you've taken  
by glances, now, without a word mistaken

Voices scuffle on a plank jetty  
waiting for the ferry  
to take them across thin water  
to fabulous islands we can never enter

Prospects, retrospects pause above  
your accustomed move  
onto timid check. You smile  
at these words, flotsam of tenuous exile

It is because you and I see  
that the sea remains sea  
whatever the language, that we stand  
even adrift, with our hearts firm on the land

Useless to deny we are pawns together  
and as such cannot prosper  
at chess, speech, on the verandah  
those transitive shadows, you, and I, Miranda.

STAN SMITH