

Beethoven

They don't simply run off
like executives abandoning their wives and children
to live in Samoa, sit in their shorts
gloating as the garish tourists ignore their finger paintings.
more intelligent they come home from school one day
to see the curtains gone, the garage swept bare, or worse stand
among the junk of the familiar back porch, their beanies
still spinning, to be met by the frowning mother
since morning gone through the change of life, pointing a broom at them
saying one word, "Away," or wake at night in mid air pitched
from the second story, blamed for someone else's bad dream;
in picnic grounds they look up after frolicking all day
 at their children
driving off, grinning through the back windows as they wave.
and so stunned they gallop on, raving for hours through the woods
 with that flame in their heads about saving sheep for some farmer
or one seat on a fire truck like a saint back in his niche,
only to find themselves in another day
again dragging the ends of their broken chains,
becoming looser and looser in their coats which
in a last noble gesture they might take off,
 standing in nothing but their flesh throw down for fate,
like Beethoven going deaf, who has just finished
 his greatest work, turns from the keyboard
to stare at the audience, barely able to hear it this far away.

