

*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.

