A Man in Midpassage

Norman Macleod
and offer one sweeping praise for all the glory
that has gone to scrub the floors of yesterdays
and all those stonefaced martyrs whose ghosts
still bleach this sand.

WILLIAM PETERSON

A MAN IN MIDPASSAGE

Is that life over
Who had covered and assuaged its central grief?
The cadres in cruel conflict
Bend the hot hallways of belief.

Out of what window should memory look:
The book in the brazier, intricate typewriter
The epitaph's instinct: which one select,
A man in the murdered frame, perhaps,
Locked in his caricature like a convict
Or strict conscience of that good
Incompletely created by any
If not blood beaten into his earth,
Tombstone tilted against evil
West of childhood, hate.

Would he walk as upright man
Once could, while adamant animals
Moved flat on the landscape
Like light over the railheads
Converge in developing thunder;

Take office, make public meaning
His poems contracted
Between airshafts

Who had first felt tamarack
Sharpen his taste
And future's handshake.

NORMAN MACLEOD