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Action

William Stafford

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ACTION

*The bolo's a knife you grab at the awkward end
and swing till it whistles a wind
that brings back flowers in the fall—
you whirl the wind down the street to straighten it all.*

*Or you go dancing and break a champagne glass—
many a life can be saved by mistakes like this:
the arm freely swings,
you lean and escape opposite from the whirlwind.*

*For today reading signs faster than signs can be read
is not fast enough: start at the other end
and go by sound; listen like bats in crisis
when they dodge things by dusk that widen the face.*

*Shadows begin to knife through the dark;
you claw the wings wider for turns. Don't
wait—whisper "Bolo!"
and swing toward the mark.*

—WILLIAM STAFFORD