

generating enough current to throb down the columns,  
revving the riderless carriage outside the fourth dimension.

He grins suddenly, mockingly, flats his fifths  
then goes south on a short bridge, tootles to the carved unicorn,  
puffs out the foyer candles along with the illusions  
so for a jigger of time you can stand it,  
draw your breath on the afterbeat, see  
he is a real live trumpet man, not a sorcerer, not  
a fakir pulling the cobra out of your basket.

He is a child: Blowing bubbles of incredible light,  
each expanding on its own rainbow, clustered  
with tiny replicas inside seeking to merge  
with music. The trumpet his mistress and mentor,  
an open-flower soul in his hands, a reformed panpipe  
converted by his kiss.

He is Imperial Rome: An announcement of gladiators,  
Caesar chariots, a boast of soldiers, a fury of fire-fleeing.  
He is Africa: Black rhythm-cry, leopard stalking,  
impala bleeding, eyes looking out of water,  
torch eyes in darkness burning edges of night,  
smoke rising, curling on winged scales,  
sucking back into the bell, recycled in his brain.

He slams a fist back in your throat, your loins,  
he turns you on a spit and hamstrings you  
with blades of ice.

He stands knee-deep in hell, his head into heaven,

cont.