

Gone too high too often. A pile
of singed feathers dripping wax on the downers, always
patching to fly one more set too close to the sun.
Trumpet man. Slow-moving target
for shooting galleries, fifty-two small pasteboards,
and heavy bookies, mean as a bull when you got between.

Was there a man at all?
Or just a flared gold phallus that seduced you
and crammed you into the gears of a music box on wheels,
hurled you across the bad weather map, into the broken-john hotels
with faded lint bedspreads, and the watered-gin back-corners
of never-quite-level-halls full of lurching bodies and bad acoustics?
Trumpet man. Inseparable composite
of flesh and that wind-thing you both die in different ways
without— cold spite for your touching,
hot pipe to all we know of paradise for his.

Tears emptied for the last set, he mounts
the god syndrome like mercury,
transcends music and sound, an entity
not protoplasm and metal but some new alchemy,
entering entrails and hair shafts
to that last submerged panging tunnel you had sealed and secured.
Deep, forcing down your fiercest barriers,
playing what no mortal ever played, filling
you, driving deeper yet overhead, levitating. Slamming
in the afterburner, rocketing upward, peeling
off new notes like bright blisters. Inhaling, exorcising