

Deployed in battle line, my bulky fleet  
of blunt and roaring vessels sailing sand  
is on alert. Our thermal sights blip full.  
Identified as enemy, I still  
beg instruments for every shred of knowing.  
These guns make pale Lord Zeus's lightning bolts,  
make trash of other tanks. Our radios  
have words. The column is approaching fast.

I give the order to destroy the targets.  
Incredible the way our rounds locate  
their marks, make tracks and turrets spin and fly.  
Grey-eyed Athena gasps, her aegis high  
above the rubble, sending us a hawk,  
a grey-backed raptor screeching victory.  
Her cloud expands more slowly than our eyes.  
My crew exults in scores like arcade games.

In thirty minutes, wounded men arrive.  
Elation dwindles in a grinding pall;  
we watch as one man fumbles on his way  
as if to hide a pistol in his sleeve.  
On closer look, he holds his severed arm  
and dies beside my tank as others groan.  
Two more make winedark seas with their own blood,  
Iraqi armored troops, surrendering.

(cont.)