Poetics Exercise 5: Enjambment

Do both parts.

**Part One (Technical / Critical): “Sense Variously Drawn Out”**

In his note on the verse of *Paradise Lost* Milton famously describes his approach to lineation as “sense variously drawn out from one verse into another.” Describe how sense is “drawn out” in one of the passages from *Paradise Lost*, or either Auden or Williams’s Breughel poem.

Instructions:

1. A screenshot of a computer

   Description automatically generatedBegin by listing at least three examples of enjambment (where sentences have been broken up by line endings).
2. Describe as precisely as possible how the sentences are broken up. Use either common sense or an AI to parse syntax (you can prompt an AI to parse the syntactic tree for you, but definitely check the output!)
3. Write two short paragraphs:

First: interpret any enjambments locally, with the context of the whole poem in mind, and feeling how the syntax warps and shifts. Why are Satan’s lines so syntactically difficult? How do the enjambments in the passage affect (or parallel) meaning? What subtle tonal shifts does Auden achieve? How does Williams carefully draw out a narrative?

Second: step back and say what it means for this poem to move away from conventionally end-stopped lines (and in Auden and Williams meter) and towards an alternate, enjambed structure. Why use this technique at all? Note that Auden’s poem takes place in an art museum, in the act of *looking* at a painting. Williams poem may be trying to re-“paint” the painting, or even set it in motion.

**Part Two (Creative): De-lineate! Re-lineate!**

Task: De-lineate and then re-lineate an enjambed poem … without looking back at the original.

Instructions:

1. Choose either Williams’s “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus,” Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts,” or a favorite poem of yours that has enjambments.
2. Retype the poem without any lines breaks
3. Put aside the original poem, and then lineate the poem however seems most appropriate (you be the judge!). You may use visual effects of spacing as desired.
4. Pick whichever enjambment you missed / moved / changed, and say briefly what happens to the poem as a result of the change.
   1. In class we will look at a few of these, so you will have a chance to say more about your chosen poem and its choices.