

## SESTINA FROM SPAIN

*Peter Stevens*

As thick as honey, heat is pouring from the sun.  
A ragged cypress flings its shadow, a fringed shawl  
Across the starkness of this empty noonday land.  
The insects doze in deep-black humps of rock  
And bowing over, bright and abject, flowers  
Bleed across the land like wounds from stony veins.

In the distance frail olive trees spread veins  
Of wrinkled boughs that reticulate the sun  
And lime and golden their pale stars of flowers  
Cling shivering to the branches; blossom shawls  
Those meagre trees which rise from boil of rocks  
That break like pustules from the dust-wracked land.

With slumps of bodies, cordite smells, the land  
Drinks in the blood now streaming from the veins  
Of these dead men unsheltered by the rocks,  
For blue-black bullets ripened in the sun,  
Bombs fell, black pears, that lifted dense earth shawls  
Strewing loose soil, no ceremonial flowers.

Into the sky dark birds, loose petals of flowers,  
Spread noisy wings as blessing on the land.  
Their whirring flight, a small salute, a shawl,  
A shroud, yet sounds like bullets' search for veins.  
Red dust and blood congeal beneath the sun,  
Yet resolution squats among these rocks.

Fire burns in far-off orchards, shells heft rocks,  
Shaking tree roots to quicken them to flower  
To be scorched fruitless by a different sun.  
Some ancient sheep-tracks wander through the land  
Where centuries of sheep have flowed, these veins  
That pulse with travel even as thunder shawls

## THE DALHOUSIE REVIEW

The sky and black rain falls like a fraying shawl  
Instead of bombs. These people thread through rocks  
Their simple lives; survival floods their veins.  
Slaughter is a way of life, and lives flower  
Where winds snatch petals tumbling to the land,  
But olives swarm within the honey sun.

Though now the sun casts everywhere a shawl  
That drapes the land with black, yet from the rocks  
A tree will flower and fruit burst from its veins.

## BETWEEN EACH TWINGE

*James E. Cooper*

Still seesaws over lineaments of life  
Descend on Paris for a mountain prize  
As one blue star-chip flake of ice is called  
In twinflower arcs from under balconies  
That tongue like chits toward a zero axe  
While all goes round. The Japanese explain,  
More deft than camel's-hair, through emptiness  
Calligraphy can only intimate,  
Within the breeze the mulberry bush goes round,  
The scapes of mist between each twinge  
Of plucking strings.