

## AN OLD STEEL ENGRAVING

Look.

The figure in the foreground breaks his fall with  
one hand. He cannot die.

The river cannot wander  
into the shadows to be dragged by willows.

The passerby is scared witless. He cannot escape.

He cannot stop staring at  
this hand which can barely raise  
the patriot

above the ground which is  
the origin and reason for it all.

More closely now:  
at the stillness of unfinished action in  
afternoon heat, at the spaces on the page. They widen  
to include us:  
we have found  
the country of our malediction where  
nothing can move until we find the word,  
nothing can stir until we say this is  
what happened and is happening and history  
is one of us who turns away  
while the other is  
turning the page.

Is this river which  
moments ago must have flashed the morse  
of a bayonet thrust. And is moving on.