

twirled without a crown
except the one
invisible beneath his arm
oh heavy heavy burden;
kept his jerkin open at the throat ...
at parties danced drunken into corners

watching the berries ripen,
his twelve year old mistress
gradually coming of age ...
at sundown lifted his green glass
and drank from the mossy cistern.
Crackers, gumming crackers ...

This one, just this one ...

substance

a carpenter's rule
a leg of a boy,
the sheet of lightning

the pine tree
sheared a thousand times
at once
looks down
and smells its
split belly,
horrified,
clean.

marble girls and boys
step out of it
singing,
pulling chains of garlands
and its shiny guts

at evening
eyehooks and bladders
cluster about
the autumn steeples.

in the equidistant
purity
of noon
a crow with one
tiny gold eye
sits in the stubble of my mind
and sings.

-- Peter Wild

Irvine, California