

Here he comes again  
shooting down the stairs at Monmartre  
taking off  
over the Seine  
like Piccard  
his cantos healthy  
his white fists clenched like Faust  
going high over the moon  
the young rushing behind  
trying to get a glimpse  
they trail like leaves behind his  
soaring loca  
-motive. Then go to bed saying  
"I have seen the man of the age."

from PARIS NOTEBOOKS

1.

The rain does not fall today  
it hesitates  
thinking perhaps  
the streets are wet enough  
after a week of rain.

Boats go left and right  
under Pont Neuf  
past Notre-Dame  
on display  
bobbing like bright  
Derain

pictures. If only the sky would lean  
harder  
put pressure on the day  
bring out golden violets  
from Jeu de Paume  
and a bright blue tie  
wrapped around the Orangerie

if only the Seine would flow with Monet  
the roof tops  
take up the song of Cezanne

but now the rain falls  
the little shots spattering  
all of Paris  
as though by Pointillists.

2.

Falling through winter  
wheat downfield

corn  
hammers against the struts  
pulling out  
over scrub oak  
and low maple  
above your house  
where the French flag waves to WWI  
fighter aces drunk on sky  
and the French countryside  
and the Marne interchanging  
loop after loop.

### Reflections in a Frozen Pond

Watching skaters  
upside down  
broken in pieces  
moving over blue lights  
on cathedral glass  
dancing through darkness

watching fire on the ice  
hissing itself to death  
a few logs popping knots  
a few sparks lost in the Alpes de Provence

watching the shadows of women  
thirty years old  
some married, some not  
whirling past me  
struggling to keep their beauty  
upside down

watching the slimness of girls  
bending skates  
into the unmarked glass  
testing their innocence

watching myself  
drinking cognac  
upside down  
the moon in a slush pool

I look up to see myself  
hair gone white  
a face of frost  
death on a bobsled beside me  
as, skis dipped  
I wave myself away taking the steepest slope  
down into the darkness.

-- Ben Pleasants

Beverly Hills, CA