

IN BACK OF THE WIND

To Louis Aragon

I complained righteously of my friend
I stole my friend's wife I stole his gold
I fled.

I laughed much my beloved friends wept
I had no friends but felony and treason
the queenliest cities of the world knew me
knew to mistrust me I knew their shadows
their green tables were my masks their lights
a garland for my brows I wore profanely
whereas their spears and snares glanced off.

I laughed and laughter gave me impunity
I wept seldom but enemies crept around

the trains drift across the edge of the landscape
the ships skirt the blue islands
here I could swagger the sunlight lent insolence
here it pleased me to catch a southern fever
that laid me abed.