The General's Dispatches

I

Standing content,
Attending flowers, birds,
Inconstant sky, a shape
Seeming unbending, but more
Flexible than any judgment,
Blue, but never downcast.

II

Yesterday a peregrine perched
Nearby, his blue-gray
A minor mode complementing this
Tonic blue, that dominant sky,
A winter triad amid the snow.

III

Steeled against the cold,
And, when summer flares,
Against the heat, playing
At angles with the sun.

IV

Pay no attention
To what is dissimilar,
Your edges and surfaces
Being hard and sharp as these.

V

The peregrine again
Silent and alert,
Encouraging, comforting,
A fellow warrior.

VI

In ways you shun
We engage the elements:
Leafless maple, ravaged ferns,
Metallic form, at attention
In the wind-driven winter rain.

VII

To lead demands a good deal
More than issuing commands:
Orders may be traced to the stars,
Angles, surfaces, curves and planes
Forged within a molten core
Spun from the sun.
Nearby, a mother and her son
Pay no mind, conjuring
Out of snow a shrine
To house their love.

VIII

It is the antagonist
One waits and watches for,
Not the enemy. One must focus
On technique and form, be ready
To accept defeat or claim
Victory, time and again,
With equal grace, until
The final contest bears down,

Like a wave in the dark.

IX

A cannon burst echoes
An exploding star.
The planet's heart is liquid
As the sun's flame. Light bends,
Space curves. What strategy
Or tactics may we devise equal
To the charges we are made of
In this theater of being
Where we take our final stand?

X

Standing in rain, wind,
Cold and snow, simply
Looking. Who knows
What he sees?

XI

Deep inside these
Planes and curves white
Heat still seethes.

XII

These bones lay scattered
Until a knowing hand gathered
And assembled them as now
They stand. We are all
Assemblages of lines
Whether straight or bending,
Tempered well or ill,
Random scraps found

To mix and haply match.

XIII

Beads of rain:
Distillates of tears
Born of strife, welding
Confident planes to secret
Angles shaping life.

XIV

Hush! Savor
Momentary magic:
Metallic blue reaching
Unison with twilight.