

broken boy

here  
on a worn wooden chair  
of an outdoor café  
down a narrow alleyway  
in old town Barcelona  
I watch through swollen eyes  
the afternoon wear on to evening

now  
on the table before me  
a glass of pale wine  
cool and damp in my hand  
yet vinegar on the tongue  
and sharp in the throat  
it is guilt and fear I taste

yesterday  
as I threaded smiling  
through the Boqueria  
a soft fruit candy  
lolling about in my mouth  
your sister called to say  
you had come apart

two nights ago  
steeped in rye whisky  
and the poison of self-loathing  
you drove your car blind  
into an ancient oak  
and slept alone in a cell  
while I dined on Cava and paella

today  
I know your truths  
though not from you  
who hide the septic wounds  
and deny their existence  
fearing judgment or perhaps  
a maternal disappointment

then  
your wife has said in betrayal  
you court final oblivion  
telling her in despair  
whether promise or threat  
you would take a walk  
by the river with your gun

this  
an echo of words  
I once said long ago  
it was not for your ears  
yet the sentiment  
somehow bled into you  
a dark and deadly heirloom

in two hours  
I could be on a plane  
rushing to where you are  
dying in our hometown  
fading fast into familiar streets  
useless I would sit beside you  
a kiss and a band-aid fail

now  
when at last we speak  
I am cut quick by your voice  
so halting and afraid  
as when you were small  
and feared harsh punishment  
for some childish crime

here  
an ocean away  
a tiny fly floats in my wine  
while I tell you softly, a whisper  
I will love you always  
and I understand too well  
what it is to be broken