

At Longfellow House
(for Marjorie)

At Longfellow House we read
poetry on the East lawn.

Henry himself pulls up a chair,

Fanny, in the kitchen, turns her head.

The colonial cavalry, wretched
with tenderness, make their retreat,

looking for a simpler war to wage.

Their horses thunder off towards the Common.

George, disarmed, remains behind,
his back pushed up against a tree.

We talk of life and death, over
the sound of traffic passing,

the sun looking down, and I wonder
what other lives we jostle here;

those ants on my book, six legged letters,
crawling their ink-black poems?

these red breasted birds,
hoping commas into the grass?

and especially that old linden bowing,
reciting his wood words quietly?

Or perhaps he is yelling?

Getting one or two lines out every year.

I would like to listen to what *he* is saying.

I suspect it is important.

But we may need to wait a while.