

## For the shipwrecked

*Berlin Feb 27, 1933*

I felt it listing that night  
We set out to protest but the police turned us back.  
We wandered the ship in a daze of confusion.  
My father shut himself in his cabin,  
Refused to be moved. *Wake me when it's over.*  
My wife took my hand. I remember  
The clarity of the stars. Their remoteness.  
Europe's glittering flashbulbs. Ironic points of light  
But far away and quite useless.  
We talked lightly of lifeboats, would not be alarmed.  
*Paris is lovely at this time of year.*  
*My uncle's brother has a job in Prague.*  
Someone said *taking on water*. Somebody cried.  
I peered over the side at the blackness,  
Imagined its touch: fire or ice. Which is worse?  
Think of the flame-fringed horizon. The Parliament burning  
(And Democracy's blackened hulk in the morning).  
My wife shut her eyes. We clutched each other  
On the tilting deck, and wept.