Approaching Firenze

A manifestation on a piece of waste land, a thousand men in uniform, all of them young. Some of them will die soon.

In the scheme of things some of them are dead, have died. We all die. Some are old men. Living in Mondsee or Ulm.

But in this moment, lifted out of what is called time, they are young. The stink of their success, their prowess, evaporates, diffuses like a mist, a heady, foxy, delicious, momentary thing. They stand easy, the whisper of the cloth that folds them sings.

Soon they will eat. Soon they will sleep. They took the city, now they can lose the city, and they will. But they spare the old bridge.