

Mutilés de Guerre: The Pigeons

I will tell you the secret of undying spirit
and what happens after death.

The hurricane walked on north,
and newsreels showed you hugging knees
on a rooftop in the gulf.
A bizarre effect, they said,
in salt-crazed snakes
the bayou tossed,
who, coming onto the land, struck many down.

Cornered across the square carved
stones cone to the peak
and no cross is there but a cock.
Shadows inside haunt the weathered
and just white shutters.

The enigma:
Radiation chars and shadows
at the speed of light.
Shock lumbers behind.
Be safe from fire by walls,
walls to disappear.

In the Upanishads
the flame leaps with seven tongues:
The destroyer; the horror:
Males with puffed necks
strut after, foot by foot,
flight forgone in dance.
Churchyards, tolls of what
comes next.
The swift; the smoky:

Flags are slate and shadowed,
among thrives grass.
Grass shines in chain-pulled
green and leaning windows.

That which dazzles, and the red:
Table rich of sacrament,
a bloody oath,
words of the word;
the flickering.
The very flames that touch us
we have known before.