***Stealing Time***

A watch falls to the sidewalk in slow motion. A shadow blurs by, palming the timepiece.

We were growing old. We would have grown older.

A lineman high up on a telephone pole looked down at the multi-colored dogshit medallions on the pavement below. Dizziness orbited around his head like a cloud of gnats and he fell among those countries like Saturn overthrown.

On the other side of town, an angel with five-o’-clock shadow stood under a street lamp, wearing a trench coat and smoking a cigarette. He opened up his coat, revealing the hot gold Rolex.

*I won it*, he claimed, *playing dice with the moon.* He sold it to a passerby.

The divine disc of Aten paused in its revolution around the earth and the weatherman predicted nothing. He got it right. The Rolex in the sky burned out like a Roman candle. Gone, too, was that fine confectionary dusting of stars. Our sleep was fitful in a night without end.

I awoke one Yankee morning with a hangover that consisted of a night sky lousy with stars and bars. They were made of gold, and falling.

They found the watch in a culvert and we discovered that the angels had been dead for a thousand years.

A snooze-alarm clock’s tiny trumpet beeped. Sunrise occurred at 6:03 AM. The candy of the moon melted into daylight. Millions dressed and hurried off to work.

The angel looked around him and moved on.

***The Messenger***

Long lateral shadow puppets stretch their weariness across the esplanade.

*The Messenger blurs by.*

Hourglass figures stand in studied attitudes of stillness. Inside them, sand is sifting down.

The bottom fills with too much time.

*The Messenger looks at his watch, disappears.*

City of chess pieces arrayed in a million opening gambits: in the blink of an eye

*He weaves you your victories and defeats. Call it a draw.*

There is only one cinema in town. It shows three movies, in the same order:

*Morning’s Matinee. Le Jour du Jour.* That mysterious film noir, *The Night*.

*To the Messenger they are a single still.*

Lovers, or shadows of lovers, are standing hand in hand beside the circular canal.

*Where is the Messenger?*

Ten minutes past de Chirico. In the moonlit piazza a child’s silhouette is motionlessly

playing hoop-and-stick. There are no months, only the moon.

*The Messenger has come and gone.*