

YES, BUT

Even if it were true,
Even if I were dead and buried in Verona,
I believe I would come out and wash my face
In the chill Spring.
I believe I would appear
Between noon and four, when nearly
Everybody else is asleep or making love,
And all the Germans turned down, the motorcycles
Muffled, chained, still.

Then the plump lizards along the Adige by San Giorgio
Come out and gaze,
Unpestered by temptation, across the water,
I would sit among them and join them in leaving.
The golden mosquitoes alone.
Why should we sit by the Adige and destroy
Anything, even our enemies, even the prey
God caused to glitter for us
Defenseless in the sun?
We are not exhausted. We are not angry, or lonely,
Or sick at heart.
We are in love lightly, lightly. We know we are shining,
Though we cannot see one another.
The wind doesn't scatter us,
Because our very lungs have fallen and drifted
Away like leaves down the Adige,
Long ago.

We breathe light.

James Wright

James Wright
[Broadside] Yes, But

New York: Bowne & Co., Stationers for
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Broadside. 8¾" x 20". Fine. A single poem.
Very uncommon and attractively printed
poem. OCLC locates only three copies.

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