

MARC DI SAVERIO

## When Still a Reader I Imagined a Tower

When still a reader I imagined a tower,  
 Around whose base a group of poets  
 Throughout the cool evenings would talk.  
 I pictured mackinaws and mitts, cigarettes,  
 Winter breaths, cold backs against the bricks,  
 Each face and brick not so different from the next,  
     But all toward the sound of speech  
     That is gone with the sight of each breath  
     Or the strength of memory.

I thought: one day, this tower, like others,  
 Will fall like a yawp: time is taller than the tower;  
 War is harder than stones.  
 When these cold poets are old and sung  
 And they look toward the tower-top, they will see  
 A clock whose hands are seized at six, strong  
     And certain as two pointing bones.  
 Then I could picture no more—save  
     Their final stares through half-

Drawn blinds, at the sealed eye—until I fell asleep  
 And rather than thought, believed: because they were poets,  
 Those hands, like wings, must fly from the clock,  
 And beat themselves away from Time, toward the south,  
 Beyond my thoughts of evening-talk....  
 Between the wings I heard a stiff joint squeak and break into song—  
     The unsealed beak, only theirs to have, only  
     Mine to hear, until my final thought is spent,  
     And newborn wills to imagine are strong.