

POST OFFICE

The Post Office colorless, gray  
Except for those red, white and blue logos  
That go a quicker way,  
Provided planes are flying  
No bomb in the hold.

Warm weather bares the mailman's knees.  
My post-person's a she,  
Triumph of diversity,  
A blonde who has some history,  
Anthraxed in '01, cutaneous type, cured by now.  
Once she opened her sack for me,  
Retrieved a love-letter dropped in mistakenly.  
Well, no mistake, I meant it when I wrote it  
But changed my mind and had to get it back  
Before it joined that irreversible stream  
Of past-due payments, hopes deferred,  
Résumés that never will be answered.

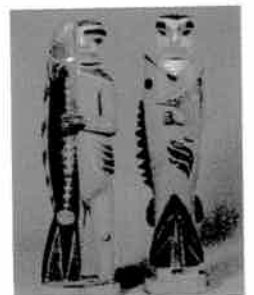
Lately I walked in Cupertino, CA,  
Two miles each way on Bollinger  
Past Safeway to Stendhal.  
Not a single mailbox.  
That damned e-mail has taken over,  
Instant phantasy of cyberspace.  
No inky words on paper blotted  
Where a tear has dropped  
Showing you really meant what you wrote.

Stamps are pure poetry -  
Mary Cassatt, Degas, Monroe and Robeson,  
Tlingit sculptures carved  
Before we took the West and then the world,  
Cute little designs spell L-O-V-E.  
Can e-mail vie with that?  
Once (I think it was in 1985)  
The Post Office issued seashell stamps,  
A set of five, 22-cent denomination -  
The frilled dogwinkle, reticulated helmet,  
New England neptune, calico scallop  
And the lightning whelk -

But these realities,  
Zipcoded, postmarked, certified,  
Are now tsunami-shredded,  
Cradled where they birthed,  
Deadlettered, mermaid-mourned,  
Embedded where the eons sleep,  
Refugees from cyberspace  
Waiting for deliverance, virtually.

3/28/05 Beth H. Lavine

*Beth*



Tlingit sculptures USA37