

Elegy for Quentin Compson

It is a grim deceit,  
    shanking ember,  
where the youths steep in  
    the muddied coils of  
        boiling rivers,  
step over the concrete fringe,  
    and cast their bodies  
        to the wake  
    of gravity.

It is a grim deceit this,  
    Pantomime of plated  
existences; it is a pander.

The unsunk head that speaks,  
    that drinks in the deluged brine,  
that untucks the tunic and  
    screams  
‘til the cords are o’rewrought with blood,  
    *that* is the serpentine wrap  
    of a fable;

*that* is the screaming center

where the logic of Ills falls

deep in its

kilter orbit

to the shrine-‘n blaze of a

God-socked sun;

You traced ‘til your

fagged limbs

could not take it,

the sour fold of existence,

and respite in your

orbiting wounds,

raked the Holy scalp,

and you are dead by the ‘morrow.

Sun,

Son,

You are more than  
the rill-resid' of your  
Gulfed bones.

You are the  
night-splay of the diamond-head  
that pins the feet of God,

You,

in your passive,  
immortal balance,

are the serve of the  
wind to the craving mouths  
of a stoked,  
and parched deadland

where the Immortal  
sweeps the splinters  
of the ragged and sun-chalked  
offed—;

Time buys the Still of your delusion;

'til they carry you on

ornament shoulders,

and the lucent temper

of day is caught in your

pageant hair,

my soul 'bys the

pleated river's cavity,

and I rent the evening Til,

and blot the northern sand

and break my fist against

the current in the night.