

## POSTSCRIPT TO MANY LETTERS

*For Robert George Hazo*

While other brothers meet and talk like foes  
or strangers or alumni—hostile, cool,  
or banal—brotherhood is still our binding.  
Somehow we have survived disintegration  
Since the quiet Pittsburgh afternoons we walked  
in the rain bareheaded, scarfless, flaunting health,  
the nights we smoked large academic pipes  
and read and talked philosophy, the years  
of seminars and uniforms and trips  
and letters postmarked Paris, Quantico,  
Beirut, Jerusalem, and San Francisco.

Nothing has changed or failed and still we have  
“the same heroes and think the same men fools.”  
Our heroes still are individuals  
resolved to face their private absolutes.  
We see the fool in all who fail themselves  
by choice and turn all promise cold with talk.  
A Levantine who saw such folly done  
two thousand years ago grew bored with life  
and said only the unborn were worth blessing.  
Not sticks, not any, not the sharpest stones  
can bruise or break the unbegotten bones.

Yet, fools and our few heroes will persist.

We cannot bless the unborn flesh or wish  
our times and cities back to countrysides  
when wigwams coned into a twist of poles.  
The future holds less answers than the past.  
Salvation lies in choice, in attitude,  
in faith that mocks glib gospelers who leave  
the name of Jesus whitewashed on a cliff.  
We still can shun what shames or shams  
the day and keep as one our vigor in the bond  
of blood where love is fierce but always fond.