

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO DEFIANCE?

People you will never want to know  
are telling you to vote, enlist,  
invest, travel to Acapulco,  
buy now and pay later, smoke,  
stop smoking, curb your dog,  
remember the whale and praise  
the Lord.

Like windshield wipers  
they repeat themselves.

Because  
they tell but never ask, you learn  
to live around them just to live.  
You understand why Paul Gauguin  
preferred Tahiti to the bourgeoisie  
of France.

But then Tahiti's  
not the answer anymore,  
and frankly never was.

This leaves  
you weighing Schulberg's waterfront  
philosophy: "You do it to him  
before he does it to you."

Reactionary, you admit, but nature's  
way, the way of this world  
where he who wins is always  
he who loses least and last....

But if you're bored of triumph  
through attrition, imitate you may  
the strategy of Puck.

Listen

carefully to all solicitations, smile  
and respond in classical Greek.

It's devious, but then it gives  
you time to smell the always  
breathing flowers.

Or to watch

dissolve into the mystery of coffee  
the faceless dice of sugar  
cubes.

Or say just how

remarkable it is that every  
evening somewhere in this world  
a play of Shakespeare's being staged  
with nothing to be won but excellence.