



we who burn here below

say what you will about nero, about that well-fed man  
in a toga who never said no to any appetite or whim  
what you will about vomitoriums & purges  
about pearls dissolved in vinegar & slaves to wipe  
the spittle, say what you will about fiddles & lyres  
are we going to quibble over stringed instruments  
& means of egress? rome is burning. blame  
who you will for the fire, say what you want  
about we who dance to the rhythm of the flame's  
flicker, maybe it was we who set the blaze  
maybe nero, maybe at last one of his human torches  
climbed down from the fiery cross clothed  
only in that light & heat that fed on his flesh to run  
through the city, say what you will, but the dancer  
who strums & twirls in the fire is not nero  
but we who burn here below, beside ourselves