



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