

TWO POEMS BY JOHN MOLE

Wasp Talk

Dead, but quizzical on my workdesk —
Buzz, buzz, poor stripy-coat
In and out of the apple, it is all done.

What I have written I have written.
Oh how we should understand each other,
Marauders of the dying fall.

You eased a passage through sweetness
And are gone. Here on the page
You leave your little lyric sting

As if to say *Was it worth it?*
All that fruitless irritation of the air
Never to come to ripeness until now.

But even as I sweep you to the ground
Your ghost is singing in the pane, a good line
Rescued from its poem. Try again.

On the Bridge

(a version of Rilke's "Pont du Carrousel")

Stone blind and half-way on this bridge of stone
He stands above the river. People glide
Like glittering water past him, open-eyed
But no less fated, just as much alone;
His blank face holds their passing in a frame
And makes a show of what they dare not name.

He is their paradigm, extinction's echo
Echoing itself, a boundary mark
To concentrate their absence in the dark
Which travels with them as they come and go.