

## The Skateboarder

We feel a roar  
Of vibration in the sidewalk  
Rising through our shoes as we pass  
Beneath the glass towers  
Downtown, the fierce immediacy  
Of the boy flipping the skateboard  
Into, out of slides and grinds  
Riding a steel hand rail  
While pushing the limits  
Of resistance as he flies  
What I remember  
As a useless Christmas toy  
And lands like a miracle on the sidewalk  
Without colliding with startled pedestrians  
Observing the usual rules  
Of space and time  
The boy inventing art from conversation  
Between body and air  
Bending the city to his delinquent will  
An aesthetic of big pants small wheels  
A lexicon of tricks and obstacles  
Not sport but defiance  
Not lifestyle but thrust and risk,  
A kick, an aversion to common sense  
The danger practiced refined remembered  
Until perfection is permanent, the body  
Retaining music the way  
Wings remember flight  
And lament the return to earth  
Where summer has begun  
Balmy undefined felicitous  
A suffering of desire  
An impatience with the assortment of lies  
He's left behind as he practices  
A brave balance, his reflection fleeting  
In the black glass of the window  
He skates past the No Skating sign  
An immaculate precision  
In his rebellion, no more personal  
Than a summer storm I hide from  
Beneath the canopy of my routine  
I am what the skateboarder defies

His middle finger raised in salute as he rolls by  
Then does a quick ollie  
Kickflip heelflip popping the nose of the board  
In a backwards flip between his legs  
Sliding down the rail again  
Arms held ready for balance  
Falling a certainty  
For the rest of us, not for him  
What survives the plunge  
Looks like anger  
But it's art pushing his body  
Into dark speed, precarious rapture