

SOFT PILLOWS

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Your talented son, discovering
that comfort attracts loveliness,
hurried for money, neglected musical genius
for sexual escapades, hazardous partying.
At the office, tedium

makes flowers and food on fine tables,
brings cold air in the summer and fire in winter;
humming through dense figures,
his thin fingers tapping out symphonies
on the drum of his Evian, distractedly,

in lost harmony with buzzing monitors.
As he aged, his features became soft
like wet flour, and music came to him:
desperate sentences at over-priced dinners
for young men in stiff Oxfords

who preferred bad hamburgers
and Zimmerman, Cobain, or that young
Public Enemy, although they are a combo,
unmelodious orchestra. What was he doing
out there, in the fire and shriek,

computerized mammals on every station?
At seven, he lay, his lips on the cold metal speaker
of the transistor radio, crackling ghosts
of big-city stations spiriting mazurkas
to such desperate countries

as Enfield, Connecticut
at three in the morning. Meager floors
safe under bare feet in summer or winter,
everything lovely was abstract and secret,
absorbed into memory. What were you thinking?