

## SOFT PILLOWS

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*David J. Callan*

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?