1989

How Fast

Albert Goldbarth

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.3750

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.
Four Poems · *Albert Goldbarth*

**How Fast**

*Many soldiers had been found dead, with no external marks on their bodies. It was thought that this was due to the wind of a passing bullet drawing out all their breath and causing them to suffocate.*

—James Burke

this is how fast:
you place the speed of a bullet
near the speed of a man and he dies
by close comparison

there are living trees we know they were alive
in the time of Jesus
stand by one you’re a blur
a little gassy wiffle in the continuum

this is how fast:
you set your night against a mayfly’s night
your bones against your greatgrandparents’ bones
your speed of joy against your speed of pain

if the light from a star is light from something
dead or dying the whole sky is
a kind of foxfire brilliantly
ticking the rate of decay and recombination

I’m going to sleep in a darkness like gneiss
I’m going to wake like an oyster shucked open
and hold a stone the size of a sponge to my brow
and let time trickle over me