2002

Poem Ending on a Line of Celan

Carol Ann Davis

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.5574

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.
CAROL ANN DAVIS

Poem Ending on a Line of Celan

For whom a prayer became
matter, ash.

Not ash, but
its tangled undercity.

If one's prayer is not unanswered,
but refuted by the same god,
god becomes
a sum of numbers,
a phrase rendered
in the surviving language. The living
do what they do: talk and forget,
as if both happen
in deference to the other.

Celan, giver of falsities,
does prayer reach us through language
only to reflect not up
but back into our mouths?

Is there no word which does not swim
in memory, does not corrupt
every good silence? That same problem
of understanding—

For whom a prayer became
an undone street, destroyed address:

'o none, o no-one, o you'