

SPEECH FOR THE REPEAL OF THE
McCARRAN ACT

As Wulfstan said on another occasion,
The strong net bellies in the wind and the spider rides it out;
But history, that sure blunderer,
Ruins the unkempt web, however silver.

I am not speaking of rose windows
Shattered by bomb-shock; the leads touselled; the glass-grains
broadcast;
If the rose be living at all
A gay gravel shall be pollen of churches.

Nor do I mean railway networks.
Torn-up tracks are no great trouble. As Wulfstan said,
It is oathbreach, faithbreach, lovebreach
Bring the invaders into the estuaries.

Shall one man drive before him ten
Unstrung from sea to sea? Let thought be free. I speak
Of the spirit's weaving, the neural
Web, the self-true mind, the trusty reflex.

ALL THESE BIRDS

Agreed that all these birds,
Hawk or heavenly lark or heard-of nightingale,
Perform upon the kitestrings of our sight
In a false distance, that the day and night
Are full of wingèd words

gone rather stale,
That nothing is so worn
As Philomel's bosom-thorn,

That it is, in fact, the male
Nightingale which sings, and that all these creatures wear
Invisible armor such as Hébert beheld
His water-ousel through, as, wrapped or shelled
In a clear bellying veil

or bubble of air,
It bucked the flood to feed
At the stream-bottom. Agreed

That the sky is a vast claire
In which the gull, despite appearances, is not
Less claustral than the oyster in its beak
And dives like nothing human; that we seek
Vainly to know the heron

(but can plot
What angle of the light
Provokes its northern flight.)

Let them be polyglot
And wordless then, those boughs that spoke with Solomon
In Hebrew canticles, and made him wise;
And let a clear and bitter wind arise