

Going Home

*for Harry*

I hope the plane isn't crowded  
when he travels so he can stretch his legs  
across three seats, and I hope  
that nice girl I met when I went home  
is working the flight, so she will let him have  
as many cushions as he wants and fix him  
a special meal of only the soft stuff that he  
eats now, and smile that pretty way of hers  
that even his wife won't mind,

and I hope the pilot is one of those  
exceptional BWEE guys who make it seem  
so easy you hardly know when you take off and  
land, just a soft bump as you taxi in, who make  
small talk for the whole trip in the parlance  
Harry loves, saying, instead of turbulence,  
"We just have to make a little giddy in de hole,"  
so all the passengers laugh, and feel comforted,  
and raise their behinds and crane their necks  
so they can see each other.

And when they land I want the sun to be  
shining, or if it's drizzling lightly  
for a rainbow to appear by the flyover, and  
his grandson to be chatting incessantly all  
the way home to his house in T'un Back Alley,  
and the breeze to be just laden with the heady  
smell of ladies of the night, though it's only  
afternoon. And his wife and daughter to  
stand on either side of him with their hands  
under his arms, and hold him up so he can look

over the rooftops down to the sea, so the view  
will enter his eyes and go straight to his heart  
as they step over the dog sleeping nearby.  
And the steelband just below will begin  
practicing a tune he's never heard before,  
so he'll forget all about where he's been,  
as the whitecaps rise and fall with the music,  
as the arranger strikes for them to stop  
and take it from the second passage,  
only slower this time.