

The Contents Of Lincoln's Pockets

Rainer Maria

At the time of his assassination:
two pairs of spectacles, a lens polisher, a pocket knife,
a watch fob, a linen handkerchief,
a brown leather wallet containing five dollars
in confederate money and nine newspaper clippings
that there is walt whitman's pen
it sat in his hand and drank ink and whitman lay upstairs
and watched the trains, fascinated by the big engines
me, i'm just anxious.
lincoln struck at the back of the head as if by a velvet curtain
his body lists and folds, creased at the hip,
and rolls to the floor beside his seat
the light's gone out, but even now he's radiating heat
these relics rise like steam and each disseminates, encircling
like a halo down trajectory of a common crowd, simmering
slammed to the back of your head
you've never been hit before
how can you deal with that kind of information?
slammed to your chest
like a curtain hits the floor
how can you deal with that kind of information?