

*Morendo, al niente*  
*(Dying away, to nothing)*

RYAN CIPRIANO

Chicago plaza, centered around a fountain  
Beside which Stanley passed away  
Not unexpectedly, since love is paramount  
And without a dime to his name to buy any,  
He didn't stand a chance against the heart  
That fumbled inside his chest, which certainly  
Wasn't his since no one's own heart would  
Treat its host so cruelly, beating at a count  
As irregular as his caloric intake, since  
The soup kitchen was only open on Wednesdays,  
And couldn't afford to let Stanley take anything with  
Him to coat his stomach with something  
That reminded him of his mother's cooking in  
Silesia, Poland, where he was Stanislaw and people  
Gave him the time of day which, when turned  
To night in this Illinois plaza, chills the bones even  
Harder than the years he spent in Panther Valley,  
Pennsylvania, dodging black lung only to be left  
With sooted skin that made him appear filthier  
As he roamed the city after his wife and by then  
Adult children died in that plane crash on their way back  
From Cincinnati in 1988, the same year he, without

Irony, took to the bottle and to the streets to mourn  
His arthritic hands, subsequently leaving him his final three years  
Without Chopin and the Opus 28 Preludes, the Fifteenth of which  
Poured out of the plaza speakers the afternoon Stanley died.