

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.