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## Criticism is Death

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Lehman: Criticism is Death

# CRITICISM IS DEATH

DAVID  
LEHMAN

—*Nijinsky, February 27, 1919*

1.

The gunman  
in the gas mask  
doesn't ask.

His task:  
to shoot cast lead  
into the newly dead.

2.

According to the lone  
assassin theory,  
the critic is the one  
at the book depository

with the gun  
who says he's  
only a "patsy"  
in the conspiracy.

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If "criticism is death,"  
a triple ring of flames,  
the dancer  
in his sleep

must answer  
with a leap  
beyond the flames.  
And if God is breath,

the blaze will spread  
in wind and no rain  
to the parchment of the brain  
where the living meet the dead.