

## Display

Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, Cairo

After they liquefied the brain  
and rivered it through the nose,  
    after they perfumed and wrapped  
the body at the opening-the-mouth  
    ceremony, the pharaoh stepped  
    into his new bodiless life.

Things of the body remained:  
offerings of figs, a golden goose head,  
    a stone version of himself  
so he could one day re-enter  
    and have a face to look out from.  
But a pharaoh who cannot move

cannot touch a horse's mane,  
the queen's breast, his ruling scepter.  
    He watched the Theban  
builders lazing on bricks,  
    his second life  
    a one-way mirror.

When his mummy was moved  
to Cairo, he floated, untethered  
    without it, wafting up  
the Nile like a hot air balloon.  
    Then he found his painted  
    eyes staring up at him,

gold body dulled by glass. Rejoined,  
he looked up at the faces staring in,  
    chewing gum, year after year,  
until the millions flooded the streets,  
    linking hands around him,  
    coughing in tear gas clouds.