

BRUCE WHITEMAN
FOR RALPH

No green mars the urban lawns outside,
winter's dead hand won't let go its grip.
And Ralph dead, damn it, most of twenty years.

The piano stands here, fulgurating
in the morning sunshine and eight o'clock
silence of brewed coffee and blue memory.

Oranges in a silver bowl, their dark sides
darker for the vivid morning light, flash
like Christmas balls, memorializing

someone else. Invisible music fills the
air, a dozen gentle melodies you
loved and lived by, something

hard by Liszt, a Haydn sonata from
your final sweet acknowledgement of
where the true at heart is found.

The comic, you said. Let's call it
rather absence of meanness, since
mean people suck, as the bumper

sticker says, and music is never about
anything but kindness. Ralph, you
still embody kindness itself and I

miss you. Music in my head assures
me that your spirit is not far away.
A shiny, silent piano stands for love.