

Albert Bender

November 22, 1988

Twenty-five years ago
amid the smiles and sparkling Dallas sunshine
one gun sounded
and silenced a nation.

Twenty-five years later
we see it all again --
the grey morning, the azure afternoon
a foreboding rain, a sun-bathed motorcade
the waves, the cheers --
Then, the President clutching his throat
a flash of orange-yellow, the head shot,
J.F.K. dead on impact
the First Lady, all in pink,
clambering onto the limousine's trunk
to scoop up a piece of hair and skull,
the panic at Parkland Memorial
the senseless hoping, the Official Word --
a riderless horse
a little girl slipping her fingers
under the flag draping the bronze casket,
a little boy saluting good-bye
to his daddy.

Twenty-five years later
we see it all again --
Kennedy's bier, Lincoln's catafalque
J.F.K. out, L.B.J. in,
the torch is passed on
the nation moves forward
new wars
better weapons --

Maybe an armored car next time