

After Arlington

It lasts like a parade in place
with only the essentials cut
in rhyming white headstones:
last names, initials,
rank, branches of service.

The names answer up in a muster
of silence while Washington's a-glut
with traffic, vectoring jets
and disproportion.

Maple groves,
road signs and gardens
remember Lady Bird and LBJ.

Facing the Department of Commerce,
Reagan's billion-dollar
palace rivals in square
feet the whole damn Pentagon.

Roosevelt's granite marker,
scaled as he asked to the length
and width of his desk, is harder
to find.

Jack Kennedy,
his widow, two children,
and his brothers share one plot.

Across the slow Potomac,
the names in black marble
of 58,000 futile deaths
consecrate less than an acre.