

# Sign

By George Starbuck

Virgin, sappy, gorgeous, the right-now  
Flutters its huge prosthetics at us, flung  
To the spotlights, frozen in motion, center-ice.

And the first rows, shaken with an afterslice  
That's bowled them into their seats like a big wet ciao.  
O daffy panoply O rare device

O flashing leg-iron at a whopping price  
Whipping us into ecstasies and how,  
The whole galumphing Garden swung and swung,

A rescue helicopter's bottom rung  
Glinting and spinning off, a scud of fluff,  
A slash of petals up against the bough,

A juggler's avalanche of silken stuff  
Gushing in white-hot verticals among  
Camels and axels and pyramids, oh wow,

Bewilderment is parachute enough.  
We jolt. A sidewise stutterstep in chorus.  
The other billboards flicker by before us.

Gone! with a budded petulance that stung.  
So talented! So targeted! So young!  
Such concentration on the bottom line!

We vanish down the IRT. A shine.  
A glimmer. Something. Nothing. To think twice  
Was to have lost the trick of paradise.

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George Starbuck was born in Columbus, Ohio. He attended the California Institute of Technology,

the University of California, the University of Chicago, and Harvard University. Starbuck spent two years as a corporal in the Military Police Corps before working at various universities. Starbuck was also a contributor to numerous periodicals including The New Yorker, The Atlantic Monthly, and Poetry magazine. He died in 1996 after a twenty-year battle with Parkinson's disease.

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