

Figures

The mind wants them:
robed Charlemagne,
dusky figure
beside a stone throne,
drawing obligation and homage —

or something from a book:
“We lost one man killed,
who was in the magazine at the time
(the poor creature was blown to pieces,
nothing but one of his hands was found)”
the rest — head, chest, thighs —
dissipated: almost a clean ending.

Such images accomplish little:
history as recreation,
a fine afternoon’s
relaxation, Death
confronts us in many guises.
Some would make a declaration,
vow fealty, spill their seed,
each one seeking the image
of his own death. Some paint
the bones of flowers.

GARRY RADISON