

## FLUORITE

I was asked about my hobbies.  
"Collecting minerals" I said and  
stopped to think.  
"Minerals in their matrix  
are what I like best."

Fluorite wears a variable habit.  
Colorless when pure, it is vodka  
in stone. More commonly  
it brandishes shades of rose to blue,  
occasional yellow. A specimen I have  
tumbles in inch-long cubes,  
superimposed, interpenetrating,  
etched on all their faces.  
The cubes have a palpable darkness,  
a grainy darkness, texture  
blacker than black.  
Solid yet fragile, when held  
up to the incandescence of light, the  
darkness deposited in this ordered  
atomic form a million years ago  
allows some rays through.  
But only on the thin edges,  
in sinister violet.

Struck with a chisel and mallet,  
unhesitatingly the cubes cleave  
and octahedra emerge.  
I have seen it done, but my hands tremble.  
I know why it cleaves so,  
but why destroy what took  
centuries to grow, then  
rested in the earth for millions,  
in a cavelet, a cool fissure in the rock?

Eerie crystal.  
Were a Martian photograph  
enlarged to reveal such polyhedral  
regularity, it would be deemed  
intelligence at work. But  
the only work here, and it is free  
is that of entropy.