

**VIRGINIA KONCHAN**

**To be alive is to be present**

at the quick takeover  
of body by mind.  
To be dead is not to see  
the white flannel curtain  
that is the world before the window;  
it's not to see the molecules of starch  
on the freshly made bed  
or the quivering boy  
wondering whether the world  
will soon end and how.  
He extricates himself  
from his environment,  
studies history from  
King David to Gaul.  
He begins to levitate,  
the way a painting begs  
to emerge from two dimensions—  
bruised skin and dappled fruit—  
to announce its theme: the all.