

1984

Dénouement

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Jeff Masten

Dénouement

I

I speak softly of things to come,
And deft words hitch their rides
On your frozen breath.
Once we spoke lungless;
Now we breathe deeply,
Aiming tongues where we
Cannot look for fear of feeling.

II

Crack me like a book
And rip out the cautious page
You wrote yourself. Leave me
Now with jagged edge,
A pageless number to think by,
And let my reader wonder,
Skipping from eighteen to
Twenty-one without a clue.

III

When freshness was all
I had, you took a bite
Out of me and I from you;
I swallowed hard, but
Now you spit me out
Unchewed.