

MICHAEL CRANE

Confess thief, confess

'Where do you steal your poems?'
people say to me. They say:

'We detect traces of Dylan,
shades of Leonard Cohen,
you use Byron for endurance,
and cummings for wit.
And what's that we hear?
An ode from Keats?
A Haiku from Basho?

We can smell Rimbaud
in your rhythm, and Ferlinghetti
in your free verse. There's Sylvia
Plath in your suicides,
and your sonnets reek of Shakespeare.

'Confess,' they say, 'Confess.
You must have stolen
your poems from somewhere.'

I accuse them all of name-dropping
and walk away, as lonely
as a cloud of golden daffodils,
as idle as a painted ship
upon a painted ...