

## From Caress to Cacophony

There's a special place where two mountain torrents merged forces  
so that, together, they could carve a gigantic gorge  
that stretches for miles  
until our Mountains give way to the Piedmont.  
It is to this confluence that the silent heron flies.

At that same place there is another stream –  
artificially inserted by man.  
It is a stream of speeding traffic  
with the power to destroy beauty, harmony and peace  
as it hurtles headlong towards the gorge's green depths.

And at that same place there stood a gigantic aeolian harp  
built from metal frames culled from grand pianos  
who had been retired from their long, and horizontal, service  
to those erudite audiences in the concert-halls of America.  
Now they would stand erect awaiting the caresses of the cool North wind  
that could still stir their hundreds of strings  
and set them vibrating in melodious harmony .

Until...

One day in February, there came a jalopy of a Jeep.  
Uncontrolled and uninsured,  
it careened off the edge of Highway 74 East  
leaving an ever-widening path of destruction  
and a discordant cacophony that expanded exponentially  
as, one-by-one, the piano-frames exploded.

So now that aeolian instrument lies in ruins –  
its sturdy metal frames shattered into shards,  
its strings scattered, spaghetti-like, upon the ground.  
Meanwhile, those vibrations still ring around inside the skull  
of that horrified human who was quietly washing his dishes  
when his ears were assailed by those sounds of destruction.