Mute Testament

Dirk Hanson*

*Iowa State University
Mute Testament

by Dirk Hanson
Journalism, Senior

I think it is the lightbulb.
I think it would be easier without the lightbulb.
It makes it too hot in here.
Before that I thought it was the phonebooth.
A coffin on end, a stale cramped box,
With dying paint and electric stench.

But it is none of those. It is the sinking
That comes when the words are lost.
When the wires are cut from mind to mouth,
And the frayed hissing pieces glow white hot,
And the sparks melt the coffin and the phone drips—
And it is obvious at the other end.

The mechanical voice: "Can't you say anything?"
And I think, you should hear it from my end,
Where the blood roars like a ram-jet,
Where the air crackles with unspoken messages,
Where I watch it all go up in flames
As I go down in helpless rage.

(When you can no longer get your tongue up,
That is the real impotence, the final paralysis.
When the words are lost, there is no place else to go.
And you quickly become sick of your own company,
When the fire is out and the ashes are cold,
And the line is dead and the dial tone hums.)