To Denise (July 1980)

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TO DENISE  
(JULY 1980)  
by  
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"I want the world to go on  
unfolding. The brain  
not grey except in death . . ."

—Denise Levertov from To Stay Alive

The TV is full of it—  
Registration and Iran  
pro and con  
Afghanistan and the draft.

West Point cadets flicker  
in intricate formations  
of Riefenstahl choreography;  
in the background  
a stone tower looms.

On a local talk show  
a medal-jeweled officer propositions  
a studio audience of 18 and 19 year olds,  
asking how many would register  
if it weren't mandatory;  
all but two raise their hands.

"Oh the times they are a changin' "  
Dylan accepts a Grammy in a tux.  
Freewheelin' now singing  
"You have to serve somebody."  
The tune is hummed by Post Office employees.

Denise, sing us a new song;  
Sing before we must choose  
"Revolution or death Revolution or death,"  
Before we have to answer  
"Which side are you on?"