The Song of Bernadotte,
or,
Trashing Scandinavian Modern

Recessive in its reach of guarding waters,
Stockholm prospers in self-serving peace.
If it has guilts, its surging suicides
May not exclusively from them derive.
There are the winters, tax indexing, Strindberg.
Neutral through two wars, though not, perhaps,
So neutral as all that--as corridor
For German troop trains Sweden profited,
Its biases discreetly processed now
Through Nobel prizes (as in dynamite
The nitroglycerin is buffered). Proud,
Not to say arrogant, this city might
Be built to lord it over Finns and Danes.
A bit of plush and grandeur, as to say
Uncluttered “good design” is very well,
But even Viking ships had ornaments
Upon the prow, and Barcelona chairs
Are comfortable compared to Swedish kinds.
Nor is this yet the Kingdom Peaceable.
In tunnels blasted in the granite cliffs
(We thank you once again, Mein Herr Nobel)
Are bases for a fleet of submarines
Still in commission, and the ferries go
How many times a day? Outside the reach
Of liquor laws. A Carrie Nation nation,
Yes, and Lizzie Borden dairy farm.
How many of those suicides do you think are?