

something i wrote for a woman id hoped would keep me from going insane

i couldnt sleep so i wrote you a poem
when i was a younger man living in sicily
i would sometimes drive
to siracusa
to walk ancient streets
where alcibiades had run amuck
way before christ
narrow streets
where sunlight contended
and lost
in a maze of dank streets
more than that
a labyrinth
suffused in a ripe aroma
of summer italians
whose dark suspicious eyes held me
with a warning
that i did not belong
that i best beat it
back to the piazza
where old men
in white linen suits
sat at tables
outside open bars
in warm light
diffused through olive trees
over board games
while inside younger men
in white shirts
with sleeves rolled above the elbows
washed espresso cups
using only their fingers
and served up
delicate pastries
on small porcelain plates

I looked at what i had sent you
and thought better of it
so i followed with this

tell her the truth
it ain't about no goddamn poem
about sicily
your flashing eyes is what woke me
that and the thought of the delicate dance it would take
to go toe to toe with you
again and again
without rousing that stinger
calmed

i drifted off
musing on the morning
when she might ask
is this a love poem?
let me look
id write back
yes it is
and you must be
some classy dame
to elicit that
from a man
smart words
for any reply
other than a simple do you wanna dance?