

The First Fifth

by Gita M. Smith

The first time that
Beethoven's Fifth was played,
people ran into the streets.

Men and women wept. No one
was left unchanged.
Thieves returned coins and silver.
Wife beaters laid hammers to their hands.
Clergy turned away from preaching hell
and sang long hymns of love at mass
Or all alone in bare-walled cells.

The audience and those outside the hall
(The poor who crouched at windows)
Wanted nothing more than love, to love,
Be loved, make love and music, all.

