

Mario Petrucci

Orders of Magnitude

One hundred thousand trillion joules
to turn an ice cap into mush

One hundred thousand billion joules
to erase a major Eastern city

A hundred thousand million joules
to run a car to death

One hundred million of the same
for Fire Brigades to reach the kitten

Ten million just to keep
December from cold feet

A hundred thousand joules for a mug
of tea – A hundred joules

for a second's worth of War and Peace
Ten to raise a hand – to lift

an average apple to the lips
A single joule to shout the command

Half a joule to pull the trigger
Just one tenth to push the button

Almost zero to have the thought.

From *Flowers of Sulphur*, Mario Petrucci, Enitharmon, 2007

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