

A TRIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I.

Like others, he chopped his food into bits and burnt it,
Being as he was a fire,
And no sweet brushfire either,
But burning carrion of hogs and cattle.
His table manners were learned by observation from a dog.
What the secondhand stores couldn't sell, they gave to him for clothes.

In the turbulence of his youth, he turned to homosexuality and drugs.
It was to be a long collaboration.

Lord knows you were kind of in trouble if he *liked* you:
I mean, some found it sickening,
The way he hopped around you like an ingratiating rabbit;
Others were more pleased with the attention.
There was also one woman he particularly liked,
Who chose, for reasons of her own, to put up with him—for a while.

II.

He took it philosophically enough
When he first found he had lost his power to shock,
But his calm soon turned to panic
When he beheld forgiveness closing in on him from all sides.
Still, he went on,
Bearing his adolescence high like a cross before him...

III.

He was good in the role of the old blind poet, toward the end,
Evoking pity and fear;
And he died, fortunately for our remembrance of him,
Before his hospital bills wore out his welcome.
When the last square inch of dirt had covered the last square inch of his coffin,
The mourners all joined hands,
And everyone heaved a sigh: "WHEW!
We'll miss him and all,
But at least NOW we can stop being polite about his so-called 'writing.'"