Classic Poetry Series

Frank O'Hara

- poems -

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Frank O'Hara (27 March 1926 - 25 July 1966)

Francis Russell "Frank" O'Hara was an American writer, poet and art critic. He was a member of the New York School of poetry.

Life

Frank O'Hara, the son of Russell Joseph O'Hara and Katherine (née Broderick) was born on March 27, 1926, at Maryland General Hospital, Baltimore and grew up in Grafton, Massachusetts. He attended St. John's High School in Worcester. He grew up believing he had been born in June, but in fact had been born in March, his parents having disguised his true date of birth because he was conceived out of wedlock. He studied piano at the New England Conservatory in Boston from 1941 to 1944 and served in the South Pacific and Japan as a sonarman on the destroyer USS Nicholas during World War II.

With the funding made available to veterans he attended Harvard University, where artist and writer Edward Gorey was his roommate. Although O'Hara majored in music and did some composing, his attendance was irregular and his interests disparate. He regularly attended classes in philosophy and theology, while writing impulsively in his spare time. O'Hara was heavily influenced by visual art and by contemporary music, which was his first love (he remained a fine piano player all his life and would often shock new partners by suddenly playing swathes of Rachmaninoff when visiting them). His favorite poets were Arthur Rimbaud, Stephane Mallarme, Boris Pasternakand Vl adimir Mayakovsky While at Harvard, O'Hara met John Ashbery and began publishing poems in the Harvard Advocate. Despite his love of music, O'Hara changed his major and graduated from Harvard in 1950 with a degree in English.

He then attended graduate school at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. While at Michigan, he won a Hopwood Award and received his M.A. in English literature in 1951. That autumn O'Hara moved into an apartment in New York City with Joe LeSueur, who would be his roommate and sometime lover for the next 11 years. It was in New York that he began teaching at The New School.

Known throughout his life for his extreme sociability, passion, and warmth,

O'Hara had hundreds of friends and lovers throughout his life, many from the New York art and poetry worlds. Soon after arriving in New York, he was employed at the front desk of the Museum of Modern Art and began to write seriously.

O'Hara was active in the art world, working as a reviewer for Artnews, and in 1960 was Assistant Curator of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions for the Museum of Modern Art. He was also friends with the artists Willem de Kooning, Norman Bluhm, Larry Rivers and Joan Mitchell.

In the early morning hours of July 24, 1966, O'Hara was struck by a dune buggy on the Fire Island beach. He died the next day of a ruptured liver. O'Hara was buried in Green River Cemetery on Long Island. The painter Larry Rivers, a longtime friend and lover[of O'Hara's, delivered the eulogy.

Poetry

While O'Hara's poetry is generally autobiographical, it tends to be based on his observations of New York life rather than exploring his past. In his introduction to The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara, Donald Allen says that "Frank O'Hara tended to think of his poems as a record of his life is apparent in much of his work." O'Hara discussed this aspect of his poetry in a statement for Donald Allen's New American Poetry: "What is happening to me, allowing for lies and exaggerations which I try to avoid, goes into my poems. I don't think my experiences are clarified or made beautiful for myself or anyone else, they are just there in whatever form I can find them." He goes on to say, "My formal 'stance' is found at the crossroads where what I know and can't get meets what is left of that I know and can bear without hatred... It may be that poetry makes life's nebulous events tangible to me and restores their detail; or conversely that poetry brings forth the intangible quality of incidents which are all too concrete and circumstantial. Or each on specific occasions, or both all the time."

His initial time in the Navy, during his basic training at Sampson Naval Training Center in upstate New York, along with earlier years spent at St. John's High School began to shape a distinguished style of solitary observation that would later inform his poems. Immersed in regimented daily routine, first Catholic school then the Navy, he was able to separate himself from the situation and make witty and often singular studies. Sometimes these were cataloged for use in later writing, or, perhaps more often, put into letters and sent off to home. This skill of scrutinizing and recording during the bustle and churn of daily life would, later, be one of the important aspects that shaped O'hara as an urban poet writing off the cuff.

Among his friends, O'Hara was known to treat poetry dismissively, as something to be done only in the moment. John Ashbery claims he witnessed O'Hara "Dashing the poems off at odd moments – in his office at the Museum of Modern Art, in the street at lunchtime or even in a room full of people – he would then put them away in drawers and cartons and half forget them."

In 1959, he wrote a mock manifesto (originally published in Yugen in 1961) called Personism: A Manifesto, in which he explains his position on formal structure: "I don't ... like rhythm, assonance, all that stuff. You just go on your nerve. If someone's chasing you down the street with a knife you just run, you don't turn around and shout, 'Give it up! I was a track star for Mineola Prep.'" He says, in response to academic overemphasis on form, "As for measure and other technical apparatus, that's just common sense: if you're going to buy a pair of pants you want them to be tight enough so everyone will want to go to bed with you. There's nothing metaphysical about it." He claims that on August 27, 1959, while talking to LeRoi Jones, he founded a movement called Personism which may be "the death of literature as we know it."

He says, "It does not have to do with personality or intimacy, far from it! But to give you a vague idea, one of its minimal aspects is to address itself to one person (other than the poet himself), thus evoking overtones of love without destroying love's life-giving vulgarity, and sustaining the poet's

feelings toward the poem while preventing love from distracting him into feeling about the person."

His poetry shows the influence of Abstract Expressionism, Surrealism, Russian poetry, and poets associated with French Symbolism. Ashbery says, "The poetry that meant the most to him when he began writing was either French – Rimbaud, Mallarmé, the Surrealists: poets who speak the language of every day into the reader's dream – or Russian – Pasternak and especially Mayakovsky, for whom he picked up what James Schuyler has called the 'intimate yell.'" As part of the New York School of poetry, O'Hara to some degree encapsulated the compositional philosophy of New York School painters.

Ashbery says, "Frank O'Hara's concept of the poem as the chronicle of the creative act that produces it was strengthened by his intimate experience of Pollock's, Kline's, and de Kooning's great paintings of the late '40s and early '50s and of the imaginative realism of painters like Jane Freilicher and Larry Rivers." This interaction between poet and painter is most evident in the poem, "Why I am Not A Painter", in which O'Hara compares the process of writing a poem called "Oranges" with a description of his friend Mike Goldberg's creation of a painting entitled "Sardines". Neither work in the end contains a reference to its title.

O'Hara was also influenced by William Carlos Williams . According to Marjorie Perloff in her book Frank O'Hara, Poet among Painters, he and Williams both use everyday language and simple statements split at irregular intervals. Perloff points out the similarities between O'Hara's "Autobiographia Literaria" and Williams's "Invocation and Conclusion." At the end of "Autobiographia Literaria," the speaker says, "And here I am, the/center of all beauty!/writing these poems!/Imagine!" Similarly, Williams at the end of "Invocation and Conclusion" says, "Now look at me!" These lines show a shared interest in the self as an individual who can only be himself in isolation. A similar idea is expressed in a line from Williams's "Danse Russe": "Who shall say I am not/ the happy genius of my household?"

In popular culture

In the 2011 film Beastly, the lovestruck main characters read O'Hara's poem Having a Coke with You aloud to each other.

In season 2 of the television series Mad Men, a character reading O'Hara's collection of poetry, Meditations in an Emergency appeared in the first episode, and again in the last episode which also used its title as the episode title. In the twelfth episode of season 2, Don Draper finds a copy of Meditations in an Emergency in Anna Draper's home in California.

In the season 1 episode of the HBO series Bored to Death entitled "The Case of the Missing Screenplay", the main character loses a screenplay written by Jim Jarmusch about the life of Frank O'Hara.

Eserleri:

<I>Books in lifetime</I>
A City Winter and Other Poems. Two Drawings by Larry Rivers. (New York: Tibor de Nagy Gallery Editions, 1951 [sic, i.e. 1952])g
Oranges: 12 pastorals. (New York: Tibor de Nagy Gallery Editions, 1953;
New York: Angel Hair Books, 1969)
Meditations in an Emergency. (New York: Grove Press, 1957; 1967)
Second Avenue. Cover drawing by Larry Rivers. (New York: Totem Press in Association with Corinth Books, 1960)
Odes. Prints by Michael Goldberg. (New York: Tiber Press, 1960)
Lunch Poems. (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, The Pocket Poets Series (No. 19), 1964)
Love Poems (Tentative Title). (New York: Tibor de Nagy Gallery Editions, 1965)

<I>Posthumous works</I>

In Memory of My Feelings, commemorative volume illustrated by 30 U.S. artists and edited by Bill Berkson (New York: The Museum of Modern Art,

The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara. edited by Donald Allen with an introduction by John Ashbery (1st ed. New York: Knopf, 1971; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995)
The Selected Poems of Frank O'Hara. edited by Donald Allen (New York:

Knopf, 1974; Vintage Books, 1974)

Standing Still and Walking in New York. edited by Donald Allen (Bolinas, Calif: Grey Fox Press; Berkeley, Calif: distributed by Bookpeople, 1975) Early Writing. edited by Donald Allen (Bolinas, Calif: Grey Fox; Berkeley:

distributed by Bookpeople, 1977)
Poems Retrieved. edited by Donald Allen (Bolinas, Calif: Grey Fox Press;

Berkeley, Calif: distributed by Bookpeople, 1977)
Selected Plays. edited by Ron Padgett, Joan Simon, and Anne Waldman (1st ed. New York: Full Court Press, 1978)
Amorous Nightmares of Delay: Selected Plays. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997)

Selected Poems, edited by Mark Ford (New York: Knopf, 2008)

<I>Exhibitions</I>

Jackson Pollock. (New York: George Braziller, Inc. 1959)

New Spanish painting and sculpture. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1960)

Robert Motherwell: with selections from the artist's writings. by Frank O'Hara (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1965)

Nakian. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966) Art Chronicles, 1954-1966. (New York: G. Braziller, 1975)

On O'Hara

Frank O'Hara: Poet Among Painters by Marjorie Perloff (New York: G. Braziller, 1977; 1st paperback ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979; Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, with a new introduction, 1998) Frank O'Hara by Alan Feldman (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979 . . .

frontispiece photo of Frank O'Hàra c. by Richard Moore)

Frank O'Hara: A Comprehensive Bibliography by Alexander Smith, Jr. (New York: Garland, 1979; 2nd print. corrected, 1980)
Homage to Frank O'Hara. edited by Bill Berkson and Joe LeSueur, cover by Jane Freilicher (originally published as Big Sky 11/12 in April, 1978; rev. ed. Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Company, 1980)

Art with the touch of a poet: Frank O'Hara. exhibit companion compiled by Hildegard Cummings (Storrs, Conn.: The William Benton Museum of Art, University of Connecticut, 1983 . . . January 24-March 13, 1983) Frank O'Hara: To Be True To A City edited by Jim Elledge (Ann Arbor:

University of Michigan Press, 1990)

City Poet: The Life and Times of Frank O'Hara by Brad Gooch (1st ed. New

York: Knopf, 1993; New York: HarperPerennial, 1994) In Memory of My Feelings: Frank O'Hara and American Art by Russell Ferguson (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles /

University of California Press, 1999)
Hyperscapes in the Poetry of Frank O'Hara: Difference, Homosexuality Topography by Hazel Smith (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2000) Digressions on Some Poems by Frank O'Hara by Joe LeSueur (New York:

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003). Frank O'Hara: The Poetics of Coterie by Lytle Shaw (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006)

1951

Alone at night in the wet city

the country's wit is not memorable.

The wind has blown all the trees down

but these anxieties remain erect, being

the heart's deliberate chambers of hurt

and fear whether from a green apartment

seeming diamonds or from an airliner

seeming fields. It's not simple or tidy

though in rows of rows and numbered;

the literal drifts colorfully and

the hair is combed with bridges, all

compromises leap to stardom and lights.

If alone I am able to love it,

the serious voices, the panic of jobs,

it is sweet to me. Far from burgeoning

verdure, the hard way in this street.

A City Winter

I understand the boredom of the clerks fatigue shifting like dunes within their eyes a frightful nausea gumming up the works that once was thought aggression in disguise. Do you remember? then how lightly dead seemed the moon when over factories it languid slid like a barrage of lead above the heart, the fierce inventories of desire. Now women wander our dreams carrying money and to our sleep's shame our hands twitch not for swift blood-sunk triremes nor languorous white horses nor ill fame, but clutch the groin that clouds a pallid sky where tow'rs are sinking in their common eye.

My ship is flung upon the gutter's wrist and cries for help of storm to violate that flesh your curiosity too late has flushed. The stem your garter tongue would twist has sunk upon the waveless bosom's mist, thigh of the city, apparition, hate, and the tower whose doves have, delicate, fled into my blood where they are not kissed.

You have left me to the sewer's meanwhile, and I have answered the sea's open wish to love me as a bonfire's watchful hand guards red the shore and guards the hairy strand, our most elegant lascivious bile, my ship sinking beneath the gutter's fish.

How can I then, my dearest winter lay, disgorge the tasty worm that eats me up falling onto the stem of a highway whose ardent rainbow is the spoon's flat cup and in the vilest of blue suited force enamored of the heated needle's arm finds the ministrant an own tongue's remorse so near the blood and still so far from harm, thus to be eaten up and gobbled down volcanoes of speedometers, the strike that heats the iris into flame and flow'rs the panting chalice so a turning pike:

you are not how the gods refused to die, and I am scarred forever neath the eye.

4 What are my eyes? if they must feed me, rank with forgetting, in the jealous forest

of lustrous blows, so luminously blank through smoke and in the light. All faint, at rest, yet I am racing towards the fear that kills them off, friends and lovers, hast'ning through tears like alcohol high in the throat of hills and hills of night, alluring! their black cheers falling upon my ears like nails. And there the bars grow thick with onanists and camps and bivouacs of bears with clubs, are fair with their blows, deal death beneath purple lamps and to me! I run! closer always move, crying my name in fields of dead I love.

I plunge deep within this frozen lake whose mirrored fastnesses fill up my heart, where tears drift from frivolity to art all white and slobbering, and by mistake are the sky. I'm no whale to cruise apart in fields impassive of my stench, my sake, my sign to crushing seas that fall like fake pillars to crash! to sow as wake my heart

and don't be niggardly. The snow drifts low and yet neglects to cover me, and I dance just ahead to keep my heart in sight. How like a queen, to seek with jealous eye the face that flees you, hidden city, white swan. There's no art to free me, blinded so.

A Quiet Poem

When music is far enough away the eyelid does not often move

and objects are still as lavender without breath or distant rejoinder.

The cloud is then so subtly dragged away by the silver flying machine

that the thought of it alone echoes unbelievably; the sound of the motor falls

like a coin toward the ocean's floor and the eye does not flicker

as it does when in the loud sun a coin rises and nicks the near air. Now,

slowly, the heart breathes to music while the coins lie in wet yellow sand.

A Step Away From Them

It's my lunch hour, so I go for a walk among the hum-colored cabs. First, down the sidewalk where laborers feed their dirty glistening torsos sandwiches and Coca-Cola, with yellow helmets on. They protect them from falling bricks, I guess. Then onto the avenue where skirts are flipping above heels and blow up over grates. The sun is hot, but the cabs stir up the air. I look at bargains in wristwatches. There are cats playing in sawdust.

On

to Times Square, where the sign blows smoke over my head, and higher the waterfall pours lightly. A Negro stands in a doorway with a toothpick, languorously agitating A blonde chorus girl clicks: he smiles and rubs his chin. Everything suddenly honks: it is 12:40 of a Thursday.

Neon in daylight is a great pleasure, as Edwin Denby would write, as are light bulbs in daylight. I stop for a cheeseburger at JULIET'S CORNER. Giulietta Maina, wife of Federico Fellini, é bell' attrice. And chocolate malted. A lady in foxes on such a day puts her poodle in a cab.

There are several Puerto
Ricans on the avenue today, which
makes it beautiful and warm. First
Bunny died, then John Latouche,
then Jackson Pollock. But is the
earth as full of life was full, of them?
And one has eaten and one walks,
past the magazines with nudes
and the posters for BULLFIGHT and
the Manhatten Storage Warehouse,
which they'll soon tear down. I
used to think they had the Armory
Show there.

A glass of papaya juice and back to work. My heart is in my

pocket, it is Poems by Pierre Reverdy. Frank O'Hara www.PoemHunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive 11

A True Account of Talking to the Sun on Fire Island

The Sun woke me this morning loud and clear, saying "Hey! I've been trying to wake you up for fifteen minutes. Don't be so rude, you are only the second poet I've ever chosen to speak to personally

so why aren't you more attentive? If I could burn you through the window I would to wake you up. I can't hang around here all day."

"Sorry, Sun, I stayed up late last night talking to Hal."

"When I woke up Mayakovsky he was a lot more prompt" the Sun said petulantly. "Most people are up already waiting to see if I'm going to put in an appearance."

I tried to apologize "I missed you yesterday." "That's better" he said. "I didn't know you'd come out." "You may be wondering why I've come so close?" "Yes" I said beginning to feel hot wondering if maybe he wasn't burning me anyway.

"Frankly I wanted to tell you I like your poetry. I see a lot on my rounds and you're okay. You may not be the greatest thing on earth, but you're different. Now, I've heard some say you're crazy, they being excessively calm themselves to my mind, and other crazy poets think that you're a boring reactionary. Not me.

Just keep on like I do and pay no attention. You'll find that people always will complain about the atmosphere, either too hot or too cold too bright or too dark, days too short or too long.

If you don't appear at all one day they think you're lazy or dead. Just keep right on, I like it.

And don't worry about your lineage poetic or natural. The Sun shines on the jungle, you know, on the tundra the sea, the ghetto. Wherever you were I knew it and saw you moving. I was waiting for you to get to work.

And now that you are making your own days, so to speak, even if no one reads you but me you won't be depressed. Not everyone can look up, even at me. It hurts their eyes."

"Oh Sun, I'm so grateful to you!"

"Thanks and remember I'm watching. It's easier for me to speak to you out here. I don't have to slide down between buildings to get your ear. I know you love Manhattan, but you ought to look up more often.

And always embrace things, people earth sky stars, as I do, freely and with the appropriate sense of space. That is your inclination, known in the heavens and you should follow it to hell, if necessary, which I doubt.

Maybe we'll speak again in Africa, of which I too am specially fond. Go back to sleep now Frank, and I may leave a tiny poem in that brain of yours as my farewell."

"Sun, don't go!" I was awake at last. "No, go I must, they're calling me." "Who are they?"

Rising he said "Some day you'll know. They're calling to you too." Darkly he rose, and then I slept.

Animals

Have you forgotten what we were like then when we were still first rate and the day came fat with an apple in its mouth

it's no use worrying about Time but we did have a few tricks up our sleeves and turned some sharp corners

the whole pasture looked like our meal we didn't need speedometers we could manage cocktails out of ice and water

I wouldn't want to be faster or greener than now if you were with me O you were the best of all my days

Ann Arbor Variations

1
Wet heat drifts through the afternoon like a campus dog, a fraternity ghost waiting to stay home from football games. The arches are empty clear to the sky.

Except for the leaves: those lashes of our thinking and dreaming and drinking sight. The spherical radiance, the Old English look, the sum of our being, "hath perced

to the roote" all our springs and falls and now rolls over our limpness, a daily dragon. We lose our health in a love of color, drown in a fountain of myriads,

as simply as children. It is too hot, our birth was given up to screaming. Our life on these street lawns seems silent. The leaves chatter their comparisons

to the wind and the sky fills up before we are out of bed. O infinite our siestas! adobe effigies in a land that is sick of us and our tanned flesh.

The wind blows towards us particularly the sobbing of our dear friends on both coasts. We are sick of living and afraid that death will not be by water, o sea.

2
Along the walks and shaded ways
pregnant women look snidely at children.
Two weeks ago they were told, in these

selfsame pools of trefoil, "the market for emeralds is collapsing," "chlorophyll shines in your eyes," "the sea's misery

is progenitor of the dark moss which hides on the north side of trees and cries." What do they think of slim kids now?

and how, when the summer's gong of day and night slithers towards their sweat and towards the nest of their arms

and thighs, do they feel about children whose hides are pearly with days of swimming? Do they mistake these fresh drops for tears?

The wind works over these women constantly! trying, perhaps, to curdle their milk or make their spring unseasonably fearful,

season they face with dread and bright eyes, The leaves, wrinkled or shiny like apples, wave women courage and sigh, a void temperature.

The alternatives of summer do not remove us from this place. The fainting into skies from a diving board, the express train to Detroit's damp bars, the excess of affection on the couch near an open window or a Bauhaus fire escape, the lazy regions of stars, all are strangers. Like Mayakovsky read on steps of cool marble, or Yeats danced in a theatre of polite music. The classroon day of dozing and grammar, the partial eclipse of the head in the row in front of the head of poplars, sweet Syrinx! last out the summer in a stay of iron. Workmen loiter before urinals, stare out windows at girders tightly strapped to clouds. And in the morning we whimper as we cook an egg, so far from fluttering sands and azure!

4
The violent No! of the sun burns the forehead of hills.
Sand fleas arrive from Salt Lake and most of the theatres close.

The leaves roll into cigars, or it seems our eyes stick together in sleep. O forest, o brook of spice, o cool gaze of strangers!

the city tumbles towards autumn in a convulsion of tourists and teachers. We dance in the dark, forget the anger of what we blame

on the day. Children toss and murmur as a rumba blankets their trees and beckons their stars closer, older, now. We move o'er the world, being so much here.

It's as if Poseidon left off counting his waters for a moment! In the fields the silence is music like the moon. The bullfrogs sleep in their hairy caves.

across the avenue a trefoil lamp of the streets tosses luckily. The leaves, finally, love us! and moonrise! we die upon the sun.

As Planned

After the first glass of vodka you can accept just about anything of life even your own mysteriousness you think it is nice that a box of matches is purple and brown and is called La Petite and comes from Sweden for they are words that you know and that is all you know words not their feelings or what they mean and you write because you know them not because you understand them because you don't you are stupid and lazy and will never be great but you do what you know because what else is there?

Anonymous submission.

At Joan's

It is almost three I sit at the marble top sorting poems, miserable the little lamp glows feebly I don't glow at all

I have another cognac and stare at two little paintings of Jean-Paul's, so great I must do so much or did they just happen

the breeze is cool barely a sound filters up through my confused eyes I am lonely for myself I can't find a real poem

if it won't happen to me what shall I do

At Night Chinamen Jump

At night Chinamen jump on Asia with a thump while in our willful way we, in secret, play

affectionate games and bruise our knees like China's shoes.

The birds push apples through grass the moon turns blue,

these apples roll beneath our buttocks like a heath

full of Chinese thrushes flushed from China's bushes.

As we love at night birds sing out of sight,

Chinese rhythms beat through us in our heat,

the apples and the birds move us like soft words,

we couple in the grace of that mysterious race.

Autobiographia Literaria

When I was a child I played by myself in a corner of the schoolyard all alone.

I hated dolls and I hated games, animals were not friendly and birds flew away.

If anyone was looking for me I hid behind a tree and cried out "I am an orphan."

And here I am, the center of all beauty! writing these poems! Imagine!

Anonymous submission.

Ave Maria

Mothers of America let your kids go to the movies get them out of the house so they won't know what you're up to it's true that fresh air is good for the body but what about the soul that grows in darkness, embossed by silvery images and when you grow old as grow old you must they won't hate you they won't criticize you they won't know they'll be in some glamorous country they first saw on a Saturday afternoon or playing hookey they may even be grateful to you for their first sexual experience which only cost you a quarter and didn't upset the peaceful home they will know where candy bars come from and gratuitous bags of popcorn as gratuitous as leaving the movie before with a pleasant stranger whose apartment is in the Heaven on Earth Bldg near the Williamsburg Bridge oh mothers you will have made the little tykes so happy because if nobody does pick them up in the movies they won't know the difference and if somebody does it'll be sheer gravy and they'll have been truly entertained either way instead of hanging around the yard or up in their room hating you prematurely since you won't have done anything horribly mean vet except keeping them from life's darker joys it's unforgivable the latter so don't blame me if you won't take this advice and the family breaks up and your children grow old and blind in

front of a TV set

seeing movies you wouldn't let them see when they were young

Call Me

The eager note on my door said "Call me," call when you get in!" so I quickly threw a few tangerines into my overnight bag, straightened my eyelids and shoulders, and

headed straight for the door. It was autumn by the time I got around the corner, oh all unwilling to be either pertinent or bemused, but the leaves were brighter than grass on the sidewalk!

Funny, I thought, that the lights are on this late and the hall door open; still up at this hour, a champion jai-alai player like himself? Oh fie! for shame! What a host, so zealous! And he was

there in the hall, flat on a sheet of blood that ran down the stairs. I did appreciate it. There are few hosts who so thoroughly prepare to greet a guest only casually invited, and that several months ago.

Chinamen Jump

At night Chinamen jump on Asia with a thump while in our willful way we, in secret, play

affectionate games and bruise our knees like China's shoes.

The birds push apples through grass the moon turns blue,

these apples roll beneath our buttocks like a heath

full of Chinese thrushes flushed from China's bushes.

As we love at night birds sing out of sight,

Chinese rhythms beat through us in our heat,

the apples and the birds move us like soft words,

we couple in the grace of that mysterious race.

Digression On Number 1, 1948

I am ill today but I am not too ill. I am not ill at all. It is a perfect day, warm for winter, cold for fall.

A fine day for seeing. I see ceramics, during lunch hour, by Mir6, and I see the sea by Leger; light, complicated Metzingers and a rude awakening by Brauner, a little table by Picasso, pink.

I am tired today but I am not too tired. I am not tired at all. There is the Pollock, white, harm will not fall, his perfect hand

and the many short voyages. They'll never fence the silver range. Stars are out and there is sea enough beneath the glistening earth to bear me toward the future which is not so dark. I see.

Click here to view the painting this poem was written about: Jackson Pollock's "Number 1 (1948)"

For Grace, After A Party

You do not always know what I am feeling. Last night in the warm spring air while I was blazing my tirade against someone who doesn't interest

me, it was love for you that set me afire,

and isn't it odd? for in rooms full of strangers my most tender feelings writhe and

bear the fruit of screaming. Put out your hand, isn't there

an ashtray, suddenly, there? beside the bed? And someone you love enters the room and says wouldn't

you like the eggs a little

different today?

And when they arrive they are just plain scrambled eggs and the warm weather is holding.

Homosexuality

So we are taking off our masks, are we, and keeping our mouths shut? as if we'd been pierced by a glance!

The song of an old cow is not more full of judgment than the vapors which escape one's soul when one is sick;

so I pull the shadows around me like a puff and crinkle my eyes as if at the most exquisite moment

of a very long opera, and then we are off! without reproach and without hope that our delicate feet

will touch the earth again, let alone "very soon." It is the law of my own voice I shall investigate.

I start like ice, my finger to my ear, my ear to my heart, that proud cur at the garbage can

in the rain. It's wonderful to admire oneself with complete candor, tallying up the merits of each

of the latrines. 14th Street is drunken and credulous, 53 rd tries to tremble but is too at rest. The good

love a park and the inept a railway station, and there are the divine ones who drag themselves up

and down the lengthening shadow of an Abyssinian head in the dust, trailing their long elegant heels of hot air

crying to confuse the brave "It's a summer day, and I want to be wanted more than anything else in the world."

In Memory of My Feelings

My quietness has a man in it, he is transparent and he carries me quietly, like a gondola, through the streets. He has several likenesses, like stars and years, like numerals.

My quietness has a number of naked selves, so many pistols I have borrowed to protect myselves from creatures who too readily recognize my weapons and have murder in their heart!

though in winter

they are warm as roses, in the desert taste of chilled anisette. At times, withdrawn, I rise into the cool skies

and gaze on at the imponderable world with the simple identification of my colleagues, the mountains. Manfred climbs to my nape, speaks, but I do not hear him,

I'm too blue.

An elephant takes up his trumpet,

money flutters from the windows of cries, silk stretching its mirror across shoulder blades. A gun is "fired."

One of me rushes

to window #13 and one of me raises his whip and one of me flutters up from the center of the track amidst the pink flamingoes, and underneath their hooves as they round the last turn my lips are scarred and brown, brushed by tails, masked in dirt's lust, definition, open mouths gasping for the cries of the bettors for the lungs of earth.

So many of my transparencies could not resist the race! Terror in earth, dried mushrooms, pink feathers, tickets, a flaking moon drifting across the muddied teeth, the imperceptible moan of covered breathing, love of the serpent!

I am underneath its leaves as the hunter crackles and pants and bursts, as the barrage balloon drifts behind a cloud and animal death whips out its flashlight, whistling

and slipping the glove off the trigger hand. The serpent's eyes redden at sight of those thorny fingernails, he is so smooth!

My transparent selves

flail about like vipers in a pail, writhing and hissing without panic, with a certain justice of response and presently the aquiline serpent comes to resemble the Medusa.

Jane Awake

The opals hiding your lids as you sleep, as you ride ponies mysteriously, spring to bloom like the blue flowers of autumn

each nine o'clock. And curls tumble languorously towards the yawning rubber band, tan, your hand pressing all that

riotous black sleep into the quiet form of daylight and its sunny disregard for the luminous volutions, oh!

and the budding waltzes we swoop through in nights. Before dawn you roar with your eyes shut, unsmiling,

your volcanic flesh hides everything from the watchman, and the tendrils of dreams strangle policemen running by

too slowly to escape you, the racing vertiginous waves of your murmuring need. But he is day's guardian saint

that policeman, and leaning from your open window you ask him what to dress to wear and to comb your hair modestly,

for that is now your mode.
Only by chance tripping on stairs do you repeat the dance, and then, in the perfect variety of

subdued, impeccably disguised, white black pink blue saffron and golden ambiance, do we find the nightly savage, in a trance.

Lines For The Fortune Cookies

I think you're wonderful and so does everyone else.

Just as Jackie Kennedy has a baby boy, so will you--even bigger.

You will meet a tall beautiful blonde stranger, and you will not say hello.

You will take a long trip and you will be very happy, though alone.

You will marry the first person who tells you your eyes are like scrambled eggs.

In the beginning there was YOU--there will always be YOU, I guess.

You will write a great play and it will run for three performances.

Please phone The Village Voice immediately: they want to interview you.

Roger L. Stevens and Kermit Bloomgarden have their eyes on you.

Relax a little; one of your most celebrated nervous tics will be your undoing.

Your first volume of poetry will be published as soon as you finish it.

You may be a hit uptown, but downtown you're legendary!

Your walk has a musical quality which will bring you fame and fortune.

You will eat cake.

Who do you think you are, anyway? Jo Van Fleet?

You think your life is like Pirandello, but it's really like O'Neill.

A few dance lessons with James Waring and who knows? Maybe something will happen.

That's not a run in your stocking, it's a hand on your leg.

I realize you've lived in France, but that doesn't mean you know EVERYTHING!

You should wear white more often--it becomes you.

The next person to speak to you will have a very intriquing proposal to make.

A lot of people in this room wish they were you.

Have you been to Mike Goldberg's show? Al Leslie's? Lee Krasner's?

At times, your disinterestedness may seem insincere, to strangers.

Now that the election's over, what are you going to do with yourself?

You are a prisoner in a croissant factory and you love it.

You eat meat. Why do you eat meat?

Beyond the horizon there is a vale of gloom.

You too could be Premier of France, if only ... if only...

Frank O'Hara

Mayakovsky

1
My heart's aflutter!
I am standing in the bath tub crying. Mother, mother who am I? If he will just come back once and kiss me on the face his coarse hair brush my temple, it's throbbing!

then I can put on my clothes I guess, and walk the streets.

I love you. I love you, but I'm turning to my verses and my heart is closing like a fist.

Words! be sick as I am sick, swoon, roll back your eyes, a pool,

and I'll stare down at my wounded beauty which at best is only a talent for poetry.

Cannot please, cannot charm or win what a poet! and the clear water is thick

with bloody blows on its head. I embrace a cloud, but when I soared it rained.

That's funny! there's blood on my chest oh yes, I've been carrying bricks what a funny place to rupture! and now it is raining on the ailanthus as I step out onto the window ledge the tracks below me are smoky and glistening with a passion for running I leap into the leaves, green like the sea

4 Now I am quietly waiting for the catastrophe of my personality to seem beautiful again, and interesting, and modern. The country is grey and brown and white in trees, snows and skies of laughter always diminishing, less funny not just darker, not just grey.

It may be the coldest day of the year, what does he think of that? I mean, what do I? And if I do, perhaps I am myself again.

Meditations In An Emergency

Am I to become profligate as if I were a blonde? Or religious as if I were French?

Each time my heart is broken it makes me feel more adventurous (and how the same names keep recurring on that interminable list!), but one of these days there'll be nothing left with which to venture forth.

Why should I share you? Why don't you get rid of someone else for a change?

I am the least difficult of men. All I want is boundless love.

Even trees understand me! Good heavens, I lie under them, too, don't I? I'm just like a pile of leaves.

However, I have never clogged myself with the praises of pastoral life, nor with nostalgia for an innocent past of perverted acts in pastures. No. One need never leave the confines of New York to get all the greenery one wishes--I can't even enjoy a blade of grass unless i know there's a subway handy, or a record store or some other sign that people do not totally _regret_ life. It is more important to affirm the least sincere; the clouds get enough attention as it is and even they continue to pass. Do they know what they're missing? Uh huh.

My eyes are vague blue, like the sky, and change all the time; they are indiscriminate but fleeting, entirely specific and disloyal, so that no one trusts me. I am always looking away. Or again at something after it has given me up. It makes me restless and that makes me unhappy, but I cannot keep them still. If only i had grey, green, black, brown, yellow eyes; I would stay at home and do something. It's not that I'm curious. On the contrary, I am bored but it's my duty to be attentive, I am needed by things as the sky must be above the earth. And lately, so great has _their_ anxiety become, I can spare myself little sleep.

Now there is only one man I like to kiss when he is unshaven. Heterosexuality! you are inexorably approaching. (How best discourage her?)

St. Serapion, I wrap myself in the robes of your whiteness which is like midnight in Dostoevsky. How I am to become a legend, my dear? I've tried love, but that holds you in the bosom of another and I'm always springing forth from it like the lotus--the ecstasy of always bursting forth! (but one must not be distracted by it!) or like a hyacinth, "to keep the filth of life away," yes, even in the heart, where the filth is pumped in and slanders and pollutes and determines. I will my will, though I may become famous for a mysterious vacancy in

that department, that greenhouse.

Destroy yourself, if you don't know!

It is easy to be beautiful; it is difficult to appear so. I admire you, beloved, for the trap you've set. It's like a final chapter no one reads because the plot is over.

"Fanny Brown is run away--scampered off with a Cornet of Horse; I do love that little Minx, & Department of the second of the se

I've got to get out of here. I choose a piece of shawl and my dirtiest suntans. I'll be back, I'll re-emerge, defeated, from the valley; you don't want me to go where you go, so I go where you don't want me to. It's only afternoon, there's a lot ahead. There won't be any mail downstairs. Turning, I spit in the lock and the knob turns.

Melancholy Breakfast

Melancholy breakfast blue overhead blue underneath

the silent egg thinks and the toaster's electrical ear waits

the stars are in "that cloud is hid"

the elements of disbelief are very strong in the morning

Morning

I've got to tell you how I love you always I think of it on grey mornings with death

in my mouth the tea is never hot enough then and the cigarette dry the maroon robe

chills me I need you and look out the window at the noiseless snow

At night on the dock the buses glow like clouds and I am lonely thinking of flutes

I miss you always when I go to the beach the sand is wet with tears that seem mine

although I never weep and hold you in my heart with a very real humor you'd be proud of

the parking lot is crowded and I stand rattling my keys the car is empty as a bicycle

what are you doing now where did you eat your lunch and were there lots of anchovies it

is difficult to think of you without me in the sentence you depress me when you are alone

Last night the stars were numerous and today snow is their calling card I'll not be cordial

there is nothing that distracts me music is only a crossword puzzle do you know how it is

when you are the only passenger if there is a place further from me I beg you do not go

Music

If I rest for a moment near The Equestrian pausing for a liver sausage sandwich in the Mayflower Shoppe, that angel seems to be leading the horse into Bergdorf's and I am naked as a table cloth, my nerves humming. Close to the fear of war and the stars which have disappeared. I have in my hands only 35c, it's so meaningless to eat! and gusts of water spray over the basins of leaves like the hammers of a glass pianoforte. If I seem to you to have lavender lips under the leaves of the world, I must tighten my belt. It's like a locomotive on the march, the season of distress and clarity and my door is open to the evenings of midwinter's lightly falling snow over the newspapers. Clasp me in your handkerchief like a tear, trumpet of early afternoon! in the foggy autumn. As they're putting up the Christmas trees on Park Avenue I shall see my daydreams walking by with dogs in blankets, put to some use before all those coloured lights come on! But no more fountains and no more rain, and the stores stay open terribly late.

My Heart

I'm not going to cry all the time nor shall I laugh all the time, I don't prefer one "strain" to another. I'd have the immediacy of a bad movie, not just a sleeper, but also the big, overproduced first-run kind. I want to be at least as alive as the vulgar. And if some aficionado of my mess says "That's not like Frank!", all to the good! I don't wear brown and grey suits all the time, do I? No. I wear workshirts to the opera, often. I want my feet to be bare, I want my face to be shaven, and my heart-you can't plan on the heart, but the better part of it, my poetry, is open.

On Seeing Larry Rivers' Washington Crossing The Delaware At The Museum Of Modern Art

Now that our hero has come back to us in his white pants and we know his nose trembling like a flag under fire, we see the calm cold river is supporting our forces, the beautiful history.

To be more revolutionary than a nun is our desire, to be secular and intimate as, when sighting a redcoat, you smile and pull the trigger. Anxieties and animosities, flaming and feeding

on theoretical considerations and the jealous spiritualities of the abstract the robot? they're smoke, billows above the physical event. They have burned up. See how free we are! as a nation of persons.

Dear father of our country, so alive you must have lied incessantly to be immediate, here are your bones crossed on my breast like a rusty flintlock, a pirate's flag, bravely specific

and ever so light in the misty glare of a crossing by water in winter to a shore other than that the bridge reaches for. Don't shoot until, the white of freedom glinting on your gun barrel, you see the general fear.

Click here to view the painting this poem was written about: Washington Crossing The Delaware"

Personal Poem

Now when I walk around at lunchtime I have only two charms in my pocket an old Roman coin Mike Kanemitsu gave me and a bolt-head that broke off a packing case when I was in Madrid the others never brought me too much luck though they did help keep me in New York against coercion but now I'm happy for a time and interested

I walk through the luminous humidity passing the House of Seagram with its wet and its loungers and the construction to the left that closed the sidewalk if I ever get to be a construction worker I'd like to have a silver hat please and get to Moriarty's where I wait for LeRoi and hear who wants to be a mover and shaker the last five years my batting average is .016 that's that, and LeRoi comes in and tells me Miles Davis was clubbed 12 times last night outside BIRDLAND by a cop a lady asks us for a nickel for a terrible disease but we don't give her one we don't like terrible diseases, then we go eat some fish and some ale it's cool but crowded we don't like Lionel Trilling we decide, we like Don Allen we don't like Henry James so much we like Herman Melville we don't want to be in the poets' walk in San Francisco even we just want to be rich and walk on girders in our silver hats I wonder if one person out of the 8,000,000 is thinking of me as I shake hands with LeRoi and buy a strap for my wristwatch and go back to work happy at the thought possibly so

Poem (Hate Is Only One Of Many Responses)

Hate is only one of many responses true, hurt and hate go hand in hand but why be afraid of hate, it is only there think of filth, is it really awesome neither is hate don't be shy of unkindness, either it's cleansing and allows you to be direct like an arrow that feels something

out and out meanness, too, lets love breathe you don't have to fight off getting in too deep you can always get out if you're not too scared

an ounce of prevention's enough to poison the heart don't think of others until you have thought of yourself, are true

all of these things, if you feel them will be graced by a certain reluctance and turn into gold

if felt by me, will be smilingly deflected by your mysterious concern

Poem (Lana Turner has collapsed!)

Lana Turner has collapsed!

I was trotting along and suddenly it started raining and snowing and you said it was hailing but hailing hits you on the head hard so it was really snowing and raining and I was in such a hurry to meet you but the traffic was acting exactly like the sky and suddenly I see a headline LANA TURNER HAS COLLAPSED! there is no snow in Hollywood there is no rain in California I have been to lots of parties and acted perfectly disgraceful but I never actually collapsed on Lana Turner we love you get up

Poem: At Night Chinamen Jump

At night Chinamen jump on Asia with a thump

while in our willful way we, in secret, play

affectionate games and bruise our knees like China's shoes.

The birds push apples through grass the moon turns blue,

these apples roll beneath our buttocks like a heath

full of Chinese thrushes flushed from China's bushes.

As we love at night birds sing out of sight,

Chinese rhythms beat through us in our heat,

the apples and the birds move us like soft words,

we couple in the grace of that mysterious race.

Rhapsody

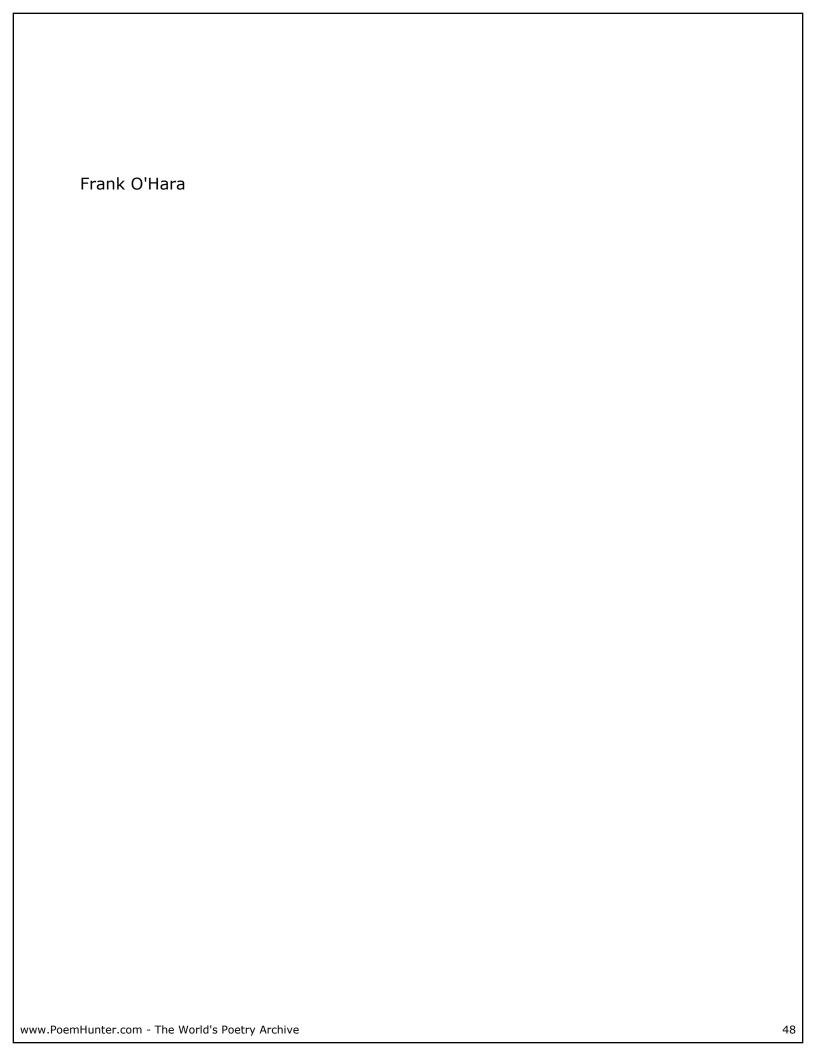
515 Madison Avenue door to heaven? portal stopped realities and eternal licentiousness or at least the jungle of impossible eagerness your marble is bronze and your lianas elevator cables swinging from the myth of ascending I would join or declining the challenge of racial attractions they zing on (into the lynch, dear friends) while everywhere love is breathing draftily like a doorway linking 53rd with 54th the east-bound with the west-bound traffic by 8,000,000s o midtown tunnels and the tunnels, too, of Holland

where is the summit where all aims are clear the pin-point light upon a fear of lust as agony's needlework grows up around the unicorn and fences him for milk- and yoghurt-work when I see Gianni I know he's thinking of John Ericson playing the Rachmaninoff 2nd or Elizabeth Taylor taking sleeping-pills and Jane thinks of Manderley and Irkutsk while I cough lightly in the smog of desire and my eyes water achingly imitating the true blue

a sight of Manahatta in the towering needle multi-faceted insight of the fly in the stringless labyrinth Canada plans a higher place than the Empire State Building I am getting into a cab at 9th Street and 1st Avenue and the Negro driver tells me about a \$120 apartment "where you can't walk across the floor after 10 at night not even to pee, cause it keeps them awake downstairs" no, I don't like that "well, I didn't take it" perfect in the hot humid morning on my way to work a little supper-club conversation for the mill of the gods

you were there always and you know all about these things as indifferent as an encyclopedia with your calm brown eyes it isn't enough to smile when you run the gauntlet you've got to spit like Niagara Falls on everybody or Victoria Falls or at least the beautiful urban fountains of Madrid as the Niger joins the Gulf of Guinea near the Menemsha Bar that is what you learn in the early morning passing Madison Avenue where you've never spent any time and stores eat up light

I have always wanted to be near it though the day is long (and I don't mean Madison Avenue) lying in a hammock on St. Mark's Place sorting my poems in the rancid nourishment of this mountainous island they are coming and we holy ones must go is Tibet historically a part of China? as I historically belong to the enormous bliss of American death



Sleeping on the Wing

Perhaps it is to avoid some great sadness, as in a Restoration tragedy the hero cries 'Sleep! O for a long sound sleep and so forget it!' that one flies, soaring above the shoreless city, veering upward from the pavement as a pigeon does when a car honks or a door slams, the door of dreams, life perpetuated in parti-colored loves and beautiful lies all in different languages.

Fear drops away too, like the cement, and you are over the Atlantic. Where is Spain? where is who? The Civil War was fought to free the slaves, was it? A sudden down-draught reminds you of gravity and your position in respect to human love. But here is where the gods are, speculating, bemused. Once you are helpless, you are free, can you believe that? Never to waken to the sad struggle of a face? to travel always over some impersonal vastness, to be out of, forever, neither in nor for!

The eyes roll asleep as if turned by the wind and the lids flutter open slightly like a wing. The world is an iceberg, so much is invisible! and was and is, and yet the form, it may be sleeping too. Those features etched in the ice of someone loved who died, you are a sculptor dreaming of space and speed, your hand alone could have done this. Curiosity, the passionate hand of desire. Dead, or sleeping? Is there speed enough? And, swooping, you relinquish all that you have made your own, the kingdom of your self sailing, for you must awake and breathe your warmth in this beloved image whether it's dead or merely disappearing, as space is disappearing and your singularity

Song (Did you see me walking by the Buick Repairs?)

Did you see me walking by the Buick Repairs? I was thinking of you having a Coke in the heat it was your face I saw on the movie magazine, no it was Fabian's I was thinking of you and down at the railroad tracks where the station has mysteriously disappeared I was thinking of you as the bus pulled away in the twilight I was thinking of you and right now

Anonymous submission.

Song (Is it dirty)

Is it dirty does it look dirty that's what you think of in the city

does it just seem dirty that's what you think of in the city you don't refuse to breathe do you

someone comes along with a very bad character he seems attractive. is he really. yes. very he's attractive as his character is bad. is it. yes

that's what you think of in the city run your finger along your no-moss mind that's not a thought that's soot

and you take a lot of dirt off someone is the character less bad. no. it improves constantly you don't refuse to breathe do you

Spleen

I know so much about things, I accept so much, it's like vomiting. And I am nourished by the shabbiness of my knowing so much about others and what they do, and accepting so much that I hate as if I didn't know what it is, to me. And what it is to them I know, and hate.

Steps

How funny you are today New York like Ginger Rogers in Swingtime and St. Bridget's steeple leaning a little to the left

here I have just jumped out of a bed full of V-days (I got tired of D-days) and blue you there still accepts me foolish and free all I want is a room up there and you in it and even the traffic halt so thick is a way for people to rub up against each other and when their surgical appliances lock they stay together for the rest of the day (what a day) I go by to check a slide and I say that painting's not so blue

where's Lana Turner she's out eating and Garbo's backstage at the Met everyone's taking their coat off so they can show a rib-cage to the rib-watchers and the park's full of dancers with their tights and shoes in little bags who are often mistaken for worker-outers at the West Side Y why not the Pittsburgh Pirates shout because they won and in a sense we're all winning we're alive

the apartment was vacated by a gay couple who moved to the country for fun they moved a day too soon even the stabbings are helping the population explosion though in the wrong country and all those liars have left the UN the Seagram Building's no longer rivalled in interest not that we need liquor (we just like it)

and the little box is out on the sidewalk next to the delicatessen so the old man can sit on it and drink beer and get knocked off it by his wife later in the day while the sun is still shining

oh god it's wonderful to get out of bed and drink too much coffee and smoke too many cigarettes and love you so much

The Day Lady Died

It is 12:20 in New York a Friday three days after Bastille day, yes it is 1959 and I go get a shoeshine because I will get off the 4:19 in Easthampton at 7:15 and then go straight to dinner and I don't know the people who will feed me

I walk up the muggy street beginning to sun and have a hamburger and a malted and buy an ugly NEW WORLD WRITING to see what the poets in Ghana are doing these days

I go on to the bank and Miss Stillwagon (first name Linda I once heard) doesn't even look up my balance for once in her life and in the GOLDEN GRIFFIN I get a little Verlaine for Patsy with drawings by Bonnard although I do think of Hesiod, trans. Richmond Lattimore or Brendan Behan's new play or Le Balcon or Les Nè gres of Genet, but I don't, I stick with Verlaine after practically going to sleep with quandariness

and for Mike I just stroll into the PARK LANE Liquor Store and ask for a bottle of Strega and then I go back where I came from to 6th Avenue and the tobacconist in the Ziegfeld Theatre and casually ask for a carton of Gauloises and a carton of Picayunes, and a NEW YORK POST with her face on it

and I am sweating a lot by now and thinking of leaning on the john door in the 5 SPOT while she whispered a song along the keyboard to Mal Waldron and everyone and I stopped breathing

The Eager Note On My Door Said "Call Me,"

The eager note on my door said "Call me," call when you get in!" so I quickly threw a few tangerines into my overnight bag, straightened my eyelids and shoulders, and

headed straight for the door. It was autumn by the time I got around the corner, oh all unwilling to be either pertinent or bemused, but the leaves were brighter than grass on the sidewalk!

Funny, I thought, that the lights are on this late and the hall door open; still up at this hour, a champion jai-alai player like himself? Oh fie! for shame! What a host, so zealous! And he was

there in the hall, flat on a sheet of blood that ran down the stairs. I did appreciate it. There are few hosts who so thoroughly prepare to greet a guest only casually invited, and that several months ago.

To the Film Industry in Crisis

Not you, lean quarterlies and swarthy periodicals with your studious incursions toward the pomposity of ants, nor you, experimental theatre in which Emotive Fruition is wedding Poetic Insight perpetually, nor you, promenading Grand Opera, obvious as an ear (though you are close to my heart), but you, Motion Picture Industry, it's you I love!

In times of crisis, we must all decide again and again whom we love. And give credit where it's due: not to my starched nurse, who taught me how to be bad and not bad rather than good (and has lately availed herself of this information), not to the Catholic Church which is at best an oversolemn introduction to cosmic entertainment, not to the American Legion, which hates everybody, but to you, glorious Silver Screen, tragic Technicolor, amorous Cinemascope, stretching Vistavision and startling Stereophonic Sound, with all your heavenly dimensions and reverberations and iconoclasms! To Richard Barthelmess as the 'tol'able' boy barefoot and in pants, Jeanette MacDonald of the flaming hair and lips and long, long neck, Sue Carroll as she sits for eternity on the damaged fender of a car and smiles, Ginger Rogers with her pageboy bob like a sausage on her shuffling shoulders, peach-melba-voiced Fred Astaire of the feet, Eric von Stroheim, the seducer of mountain-climbers' gasping spouses, the Tarzans, each and every one of you (I cannot bring myself to prefer Johnny Weissmuller to Lex Barker, I cannot!), Mae West in a furry sled, her bordello radiance and bland remarks, Rudolph Valentino of the moon, its crushing passions, and moonlike, too, the gentle Norma Shearer, Miriam Hopkins dropping her champagne glass off Joel McCrea's yacht, and crying into the dappled sea, Clark Gable rescuing Gene Tierney from Russia and Allan Jones rescuing Kitty Carlisle from Harpo Marx, Cornel Wilde coughing blood on the piano keys while Merle Oberon berates, Marilyn Monroe in her little spike heels reeling through Niagara Falls, Joseph Cotten puzzling and Orson Welles puzzled and Dolores del Rio eating orchids for lunch and breaking mirrors, Gloria Swanson reclining, and Jean Harlow reclining and wiggling, and Alice Faye reclining and wiggling and singing, Myrna Loy being calm and wise, William Powell in his stunning urbanity, Elizabeth Taylor blossoming, yes, to you and to all you others, the great, the near-great, the featured, the extras who pass quickly and return in dreams saying your one or two lines, my love!

Long may you illumine space with your marvellous appearances, delays and enunciations, and may the money of the world glitteringly cover you as you rest after a long day under the kleig lights with your faces in packs for our edification, the way the clouds come often at night but the heavens operate on the star system. It is a divine precedent you perpetuate! Roll on, reels of celluloid, as the great earth rolls on!

To The Harbormaster

I wanted to be sure to reach you; though my ship was on the way it got caught in some moorings. I am always tying up and then deciding to depart. In storms and at sunset, with the metallic coils of the tide around my fathomless arms, I am unable to understand the forms of my vanity or I am hard alee with my Polish rudder in my hand and the sun sinking. To you I offer my hull and the tattered cordage of my will. The terrible channels where the wind drives me against the brown lips of the reeds are not all behind me. Yet I trust the sanity of my vessel; and if it sinks it may well be in answer to the reasoning of the eternal voices, the waves which have kept me from reaching you.

Today

Oh! kangaroos, sequins, chocolate sodas! You really are beautiful! Pearls, harmonicas, jujubes, aspirins! all the stuff they've always talked about

still makes a poem a surprise! These things are with us every day even on beachheads and biers. They do have meaning. They're strong as rocks.

V.R. Lang

You are so serious, as if a glacier spoke in your ear or you had to walk through the great gate of Kiev to get to the living room.

I worry about this because I love you. As if it weren't grotesque enough that we live in hydrogen and breathe like atomizers, you have to think I'm a great architect!

and you float regally by on your incessant escalator, calm, a jungle queen. Thinking it a steam shovel. Looking a little uneasy. But you are yourself again, yanking silver beads off your neck.

Remember, the Russian Easter Overture is full of bunnies. Be always high, full of regard and honor and lanolin. Oh ride horseback in pink linen, be happy! and ride with your beads on, because it rains.

Why I Am Not A Painter

I am not a painter, I am a poet. Why? I think I would rather be a painter, but I am not. Well,

for instance, Mike Goldberg is starting a painting. I drop in. "Sit down and have a drink" he says. I drink; we drink. I look up. "You have SARDINES in it." "Yes, it needed something there." "Oh." I go and the days go by and I drop in again. The painting is going on, and I go, and the days go by. I drop in. The painting is finished. "Where's SARDINES?" All that's left is just letters, "It was too much," Mike says.

But me? One day I am thinking of a color: orange. I write a line about orange. Pretty soon it is a whole page of words, not lines. Then another page. There should be so much more, not of orange, of words, of how terrible orange is and life. Days go by. It is even in prose, I am a real poet. My poem is finished and I haven't mentioned orange yet. It's twelve poems, I call it ORANGES. And one day in a gallery I see Mike's painting, called SARDINES.