

A POEM FOR PAT LOWTHER

1935- 1975

1

Your empty office.  
The daylight  
square on the floor  
shrinks to rectangle, to line.  
Blood drains out of colours.  
My lips go cold, calcareous.

11

Closed shell.

One muscle.

The grain of sand the muscle  
worries over.

iii

To wait: to partly think.  
The one muscle, the tongue, laminating.  
I think in the feminine.  
tense for a verb: the i-n-g,  
its on-going.

iv

Closed shell. Wanting  
to be broken  
utterly.

So the world falls through my forehead  
resistlessly as rain.

v

I walk in rain through the rosegarden  
to the student parkinglot,  
partly thinking.

Everybody's talking worried smiling-  
today again, you didn't come to school.

In my notebook misgivings, a house  
of cards poem. In my forehead,  
congealing, a colour.

A rose leans over the sidewalk.

I cup it, the petals

give-

my hand

trapped

losing

trapped rainwater.

vi

*I would ask you  
learn as I learn  
patience with mine  
and your own silence.*

vii

Black pearl.

Under the tongue.

The grain of sand the muscle  
worries over.

*A seed patient as time.*



viii

The Finnish *Kalevala*: a spell,  
a song poem. Two sit,  
hands clasped together across a table,  
and sway to the rhythm  
forward and back;  
a first voice, and a second  
to echo  
the meaning of the first:

"Dearest friend, and much-loved sister,

- Best loved of all companions,  
Come and let us sing together,

Let us now begin our converse,  
Since at length we meet together,

- From two widely sundered regions.  
Rarely can we meet together,

- Rarely one can meet the other,  
In these dismal northern regions,

- In this dreary land..."

ix

*In the dance one hand  
fits into another's  
...secret five bones.*

x

SHE HAD A LEAN, OVAL MODIGLIANI  
FACE WITH A STRONG CHIN,  
AND HER HAIR HUNG  
LONG AND DARK.

xi

Woman against the stained-  
glass window. Clear  
how much she knows:  
a dark bird's  
folded wings, the hair  
at her forehead around  
her knowing.  
Unknown persons  
remember her hands.

A student poem written for another woman.  
Professor Lowther reading it  
this far.

*Think of electric storms  
in a bird's brain.  
Head fallen foreward  
forearms pressed together  
her thin hand goes, to  
feathers and blood  
on the inside of the window:  
the centre  
of what she knows.*

xri

Stone  
has been known to  
break

because of what it was  
hearing.

xiii

Falling.

Snow.

On a white horse  
you disintegrate  
in white, distance.

*Resistlessly*

comes this

beginning

to want

to follow.

xiv

You give a friend a copy of *Milk Stone*,  
inscribe *Pat Lowther R.I.P. 1935- 1975.*

XV

POLICE INVESTIGATE THE  
POSSIBILITY THAT A BODY  
FOUND IN A CREEK NEAR  
BRITANNIA BEACH IS THAT  
OF MISSING VANCOUVER  
POET PAT LOWTHER. POLICE  
HAVE OBTAINED DENTAL X-  
RAYS OF LOWTHER.

*Will our bones tell  
sisters, what we died of?  
how love broke us  
in that helplessly desired  
breaking...*

AND TODAY ORDERED X-RAYS  
OF THE SKULL TO SEE IF  
THEY TALLY..



xvi

I had three big cousins up north.  
By grade nine Mike and Jake  
were loggers. Jamie drew pictures.  
No one knows why.

Aunt Mabel tried for months on end  
to talk Jamie into being a man  
One night he went out

*As you said  
(and how could you know  
already the grey  
hardening in your limbs)*

*- Christ O Christ, no one lives long.*

and chopped off his hand.  
And gashed his neck in two places.  
It's not like  
our family.

*- Mike and Jake are dead.  
Logging accident.*



xvii

Trapped rainwater: pool

- of milk and stars I float in  
pool the size of cupped hands in the side of

- Christ O Christ, sepulchred Christ  
in the side of an ocean-abraded log.

- Weeds curl around my fingers fish graze

The sky

- fish graze the souls of my feet.

Desolate, host, the sky

is held there. I kneel,

lay my face in it.

xviii

THE PROSECUTOR SAID THE  
CROWN ALLEGES THAT ROY  
LOWTHER, WHO IS ALSO A  
POET, WAS JEALOUS OF HIS  
WIFE'S SUCCESS IN THE  
POETRY FIELD

- ashes in his palms, wind  
rising in his veins

AND KILLED HER WITH BLOWS  
FROM A HAMMER.

- when she awakens she will  
turn over mirrors, make  
blue fists against  
her voice in the chimney

A BLOOD  
AND FLUIDS SPECIALIST TOLD  
THE JURY THURSDAY THAT HE  
FOUND TRACES OF HUMAN  
BLOOD BETWEEN THE HEAD AND  
HANDLE OF A CLAW HAMMER..

xix

Wings flutter, from your breast the white  
dove startles. A figure, Silence,  
candles a blue egg:  
the death dream.



Inside its blue walls  
a darker inner sphere  
moans. In convoluted  
halls and catacombs  
a raven steals silver-  
peels the dove's image  
from your bedroom  
mirror.

xx

man I love  
in every man  
why do you shift your eyes  
and the known surfaces  
of your body?

xxi

MR. LOWTHER, 50, SAID HE  
FOUND HER IN BED WEARING  
ONLY A PINK BLOUSE, AND  
THE RIGHT SIDE OF HER HEAD  
WAS COVERED IN BLOOD.

- He too cries

like a bird a black bird  
or a memory.

YES, MY LORD, WE COUNTED  
117 BLOODSPOTS ON THE WALL.

xxii

Pacific. Ocean:

laminating

of blue milk.

Her *secret five bones* in the mother  
of pearl hand, the uterus.

xxiii,

the shoulders on the breasts  
the thighs of a girl  
you are bare.

your white horse laces  
the wind's shrill seabirds  
through its mane, your hair.

a weapon slashes water slashes  
shins of the horse, laces  
blood  
with blood.

blind keening uterus.  
mother of pearl hand  
uncovering shoulders  
breasts thighs  
of a girl.



xxiv

gentle fingers  
lift up the bones of a woman:  
... they have not such love  
for the living  
who are not finished  
or predicted.

xxv

Our neighbour's one man horse, his old black nag.  
She was crippled up bad, almost *finished*.  
For a month we'd glimpse him, hands in his pockets,  
staring up river. One morning when Jemima was  
hobbling away toward the salt lick  
Jed levelled the rifle and shot her.

You have to understand  
the way we do things in the country.

xxvi

THE SPECTACLE OF MUR-  
DER SUSPECT, ROY LOWTH-  
ER, BATHED IN MOONLIGHT  
CARRYING HIS WIFE'S BODY  
FROM 566 EAST 46TH AND  
PLACING IT IN THE TRUNK  
OF HIS CAR. LOWTHER  
SAID HE REMOVED HIS  
WIFE'S BODY FROM THE  
TRUNK AND, FINDING IT  
TOO HEAVY TO CARRY,  
DRAGGED IT ABOUT 50 TO 75  
FEET TO WHERE A FOOTPATH

- *sister, artist- it isn't the height,  
it's the drop that's terrible*

DROPS TO

- *water takes me  
where landhold falls away*

WATERS OF THE CREEK."IT  
DROPPED AWAY AND CAME TO  
REST ON A ROCK," LOWTHER  
SAID. MR.H-"SO THE LAST  
SIGHT YOU HAD OF HER SHE  
WAS WEARING A BLOUSE,  
SLACKS AND SHOES?" THE  
JURY WAS TOLD EARLIER  
THAT PATRICIA LOWTHER'S  
BODY WAS NUDE WHEN DIS-  
COVERED, WEDGED BETWEEN  
ROCKS.

- *the rush and pressure  
of blood like a great river  
gathering volume  
falling among caverns  
in the listening skull.*

xxvii

The feminine. The i-n-g. The always  
keening  
mother  
of pearl  
mouth.

xxviii

*And the child dreamed blue water  
green water  
and the death of water.*

xxix

Women  
have been known to  
turn to  
stone.

*Stone Diary:*

Lodestone

Moonstone

*Milk Stone*

Bloodstone

Whetstone.

xxx

Husband,  
intransitive  
anger  
bruises  
under your eyes. *Speak to me*  
*for Gods sake.* Give me  
(find time  
now to touch her)  
your voice  
in avalanche  
from your own  
precipice,  
  
our making love.

xpxi

she wraps her hair around his wrist  
too often; wishes she could not leave  
her body

like this.

to touch: to leave

purple leaves in the light,

to make dark love,

to bruise.

hum hum run.

run from this.

this is not touch,

no. roy, find time

now to touch her.

it takes long time

to touch. but time

takes touch

her long way.



xxxii

*And the child dreamed all  
...luminous and falling  
as softly as the snow.*

xxxiii

Take her seriously.  
Like a mouthful of blood.

Trappers alone on snowfields  
step into their own snares;  
women court dangerous men  
who will beat them to death.

xxxiv

"THE QUEEN AWAY IN THE COLONIES WAVING HER HAND," SAYS LOWTHER. BECAUSE OF HIS RECORD OF RADICAL POLITICAL COMMITMENT HE DISTRUSTED THE COURT SYSTEM. WAVING HIS HAND AND DRINKING FROM STRYFOAM CUPS,

My brother's haywire friend. Totally useless at hunting. Instead of meat he once brought home a skittery albino squirrel; built cage, treadwheel; rigged it up in his parents' posh backyard.

LOWTHER TELLS THE JURY ABOUT ALL THE RADICAL PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS HE HAS BEEN A PART OF,

The squirrel galloped a lot of miles in that wheel. Meantime, all its hair fell out. It died with the tomfool standing there, refusing to believe it would.

SAYING THAT HE WAS A "PIONEER POLITICAL PRISONER" AND THAT HE RECEIVED 18 MONTHS IN A WASHINGTON JAIL, "EVEN THOUGH THE HISTORICAL PRECEDENT WAS SIX MONTHS."

The cage is still hanging next to the diving board, the barbecue and a store-bought sign reading:

We don't swim in your toilet.  
So don't you pee in our pool.

XXXV

*often now I forget  
how to make love  
but I think I am ready  
to learn politics.*

xxxvi

It has become recognized that persons taken hostage often adopt the values, mores and beliefs of their captors. It was previously thought that this was due to brainwashing. It becomes evident however, that the victims, their instincts sharpened by the threat to their lives, often perceive their chance for survival as greater when their lives are entrusted to their captors, than when entrusted to a society which, bound and determined to get its man, also seriously endangers the life of the hostage. A woman hostage

*- I am in love  
with the marvellous  
cancer you sew*

will fall in love, make love with her captor. Should the incident be settled according to the best plans of the police (ie. the prisoner held in jail, the woman freed, unhurt) the woman will pursue her relationship with the man as far as possible,

*- my fists  
crying  
against that reaching  
more terrible  
even than death*

never again  
adjusting psychologically to the values, mores and beliefs of the society into which she was born.

Stockholm Syndrome. I flick the Off tv switch, and push back deep into my chair. Half of me wonders How. The other (my body one thinking muscle, would I slowly wrap my hair around his waist? his ankle?) half merely wonders Where I too would begin.

xxxvii

Words to dress and undress in. Diaphanous rooms, words.  
You taught me the meaning of the word, her lover said.  
She taught him the meaning of the nineteenth century  
eight letter word. Mistress. She knew what she was doing.  
Leaving. She was a song-, black-, snow-, love-, blue-bird.  
Leaving a poet plenty of time.

She said, the moon is an egg, break it if you need me.  
She knew what she was doing. She was undress and dressing  
in songs blacks snows and blue. She knew the black room  
in the candled blue egg. Esa luna, esa luna, he said.  
The broken wing. The broken shell of an egg. I love you,  
I love you, she said. Agent: lover: duende.

xxxviii

I dream my lover Anaximander  
explaining the earth as concave.

I wake from him in a lakebed  
wearing only a pink blouse.

xxxix

"Peter peter pumpkin eater, had."

My God, what was that? Can  
the moon that revolves in the dark  
be revolving the opposite way? Is there  
a tomcat out on the fence, yellow eyed,  
speaking in tongues?

"Put her in a  
pumpkin shell, and there he kept her  
very well."

Is the earwig in the  
peach? the idea in the brain? Is it  
mice in the kitchen drawer, hauling  
the hammer, hauling?

Or,  
the earwig in the brain.



12  
The being,  
the *human* being  
standing overhead.

Who what when where why, his  
five ~~endless~~ w's  
have turned tail, turned teeth  
squealing in his brain.

The paw paw paw  
of forepaws- he feels them, hand  
over his heart. Who and why  
suck and gnaw.

*Broken eyes*  
*immovable*  
*become a perfect image*  
*for us all.*

xli

Between your thumb and ringfinger  
you hold my chin. Some  
earwig whispers.

A needle:  
my mind  
tracks last  
words of a record, bumps  
centre, lifts  
away.

You wait. Your eye  
too bright. My eye

drops:  
a warm brown

egg  
in your palm.

xlii

Husband, have you cupped the moon  
or the head of a flashlight? your  
bloodcandescent fingers  
cup a jack-in-the-box in wait, release it

- *love without death*  
*demanding death*

wall to wall as abstract (oh Coup: de maître,  
d'état, de grâce.)

Lady I  
wash your  
blouse out in  
moonmilk, wash  
the blood from  
your arms and face;

Lady we  
take hands, talk  
*Rosicrucian*, talk  
Corday

Lady, Macbeth.

xliii

one hundred seventeen  
bloodspots  
on the wall.

xliv

We're soaking wet  
but here. Thin beard, loose  
breasts, our student veneer.  
Outside, *the intersection*  
*where I have chosen*  
*unwittingly to die.*  
Tires through rain  
drown, voices, whether  
minister  
or poet speaker.

The man who has been awarded  
your job sits in front of me,  
arranges suede coattails  
like a pianist.  
His mind and that of his friend  
- all things, my dear  
are an exchange for fire  
heraclitean, ivy  
league. In an opus, find them  
drinks in hand in the foyer  
sitting out weaker moments  
of a master. Here, they last  
ten minutes, leave.  
I fear him, come

to revere his work.  
The while, a hard  
old woman in my blood  
fingers at a coattail.

xliv

Now you too lie with skeletons  
heaped about you;  
our small crooked hands  
touch you for comfort.

A skull  
the daymoon  
hangs over  
the sea.

The sky  
is blue eyelids  
halving  
skull eyes,  
and the tide  
spills forward  
through them and  
down,  
the moment  
someone  
walks out to  
drown  
in that face.

Wind  
in hollows of water: voice.  
The colour of cloud  
a horse drifts,  
wades from the  
tidal reach. She  
stalks forward dune  
by dune,  
her eyes: sockets

in the Modigliani  
moon. P

xlvi

The chanting of the *Kalevala*  
is accompanied by the *kantele*,  
a stringed instrument. Jacob Grimm  
ascribes its invention to the Finns'  
highest god, Wainamoinen: inventor  
of poetic writing and rhythm. Or  
*walking steadily*  
*into the water.*



xlvi

The dead are patient.

Stone.

xlix

*Their hands are blind*

1

*moving...*

*like a machine dreamed.*

*by Leonardo*

li

*the man  
who kisses  
stone*

111

*finger bones  
washed up on beaches.*

lill

*I pass an old woman  
- hear her keening  
in my blood  
making a stringed instrument  
with her back to the sun.*

liv

*Write to me, darling  
from the other world.*

Reaching through heaving faulting dark  
I call, sink my fingers through  
o's g's d's- letters  
of your words.

lv

To sleep, to watch you  
choosing seven blue stars  
for a still  
unfinished psalm;  
to watch you bring  
the wholly inarticulate  
in your palm, not  
the way one carries water-  
the way one  
carries light



lvi

The night comes in. The open window.

Silence. Nothing to write.

Without touch

the pearl

delaminates, ceases living.

The curtains drift, the moon

lowers her forehead

into my hand.

lvii

*My thoughts  
though less articulate  
than image,  
still have in them  
something like a skeleton.*

lviii

Among fern  
in deep water  
a dark  
wheeling  
of hair.  
In deep water  
pausing  
looking  
over her shoulder  
the skeleton  
of a girl.

She  
*silently*  
*walks*  
*through*  
*silt*  
*lapping*  
*' silk*  
to her ankles.

lix

And the Lord God caused a deep  
sleep to fall upon Adam  
and he slept: and He took  
one of his ribs, and closed up  
the flesh instead thereof;  
And the rib...

lx

The five-stringed harp, the *kantele*:  
first made, according to Grimm,  
because:

"a maiden  
is drowned.  
Someone  
makes a harp  
of her breastbone,  
the pegs  
of her fingers,  
the strings  
of her hair.  
The sound  
of the first  
chord  
strummed  
across the harp  
kills  
her murderer."

lxi

Here in the dark  
under the skin  
of my small left breast  
the fey  
hours I knew her  
pass  
through my heart.  
Here, no wound.  
Cradled here  
invulnerable  
the crescent moon.

lxii

Her lover gave her a book, the valediction-  
Always I am with you. Even if I were blind  
I would find you.

lxiii

*Always, from breath to breath...  
saying goodbye.*



DIVORCE POEM

1

My husband is a lawyer  
or a dentist.

But when I first met him  
he was driver of a Western  
White Star.

ii

In those days  
I was not sophisticated. I loved  
anything shiny.  
So you can imagine (chrome! chrome!)  
how I loved  
that truck.  
Sometimes  
when we're sleeping  
the truck crashes

111

through the bedroom wall.  
I smile for quite a little while  
before I wake  
my husband  
up.

iv

"Before the Presentation of the Dentistry Shingles  
a moment of silence, please."

Doctor D.D.Smith: "Gentlemen. It behooves me on this  
solemn occasion  
to relate a little incident from my boyhood."  
In a circle, 40 beerdrinkers'  
backs turn to his face.  
There's the jerky  
jacking off motion  
as of  
40 hands in contest to  
ejaculate into the woods. Somebody says, New.  
All face front, fire  
superlative arches of beer  
onto Doc D.D.S.'s 3piece suit. Some tackle,  
heap onto him as if he were a Med  
student quarterback.  
The rest whip eased  
beerbottles into the fireplace.  
Somebody rips open, dumps the box  
of door plaques. The room  
a mini stadium  
of bodies, shouts of

**WE'RE NUMBER ONE!**

v  
Yes, Virginia. There is a \$anta Claus.

vi

who are you, asleep.  
who am I, asleep beside you.  
who are they, the ones  
holding?

I hate you more  
often than not  
in the day,  
hate your proud  
michelangelo  
turning.  
the core of a man, that turning.  
to self interest.

I hurt  
and burn with the hurt  
turning  
to my self to my  
hurt words burning  
the palms of my hands down  
to bone, vowel, ash.

tense. terrible. David.  
I know I can have you  
no other way.  
head  
in my burnt hands I  
cry out vowels, cry alone  
in my sleep.

no other way.

but who are you, asleep.  
and I, asleep beside you.  
who, the man lifting  
kissing  
her hands.

and she, saying give me give me. hands  
taking the dark  
to a nadir, a core

and seining  
the under stars through him.

oh. the ones  
holding.

vii

Trees going dark.  
drinking the black, the lake.  
The moon across the water, its light  
to the edge of this  
month without you. Across the mouth  
of a half buried bottle  
the wind: your voice beside me.

Blindfolded  
in the long hair of a cloud  
the moon gives up  
our images.

Under the imagination of your hands  
my breasts: you touch  
the way a deer  
steps into a clearing.

My highmindedness  
an eggshell,  
breaks  
on that second. And who  
is this woman? She's  
egg-wet,  
addling.



viii

I thought haltingly, stuttered: years  
you interrupted, pushed your balls your words  
in my mouth.

My words

took to the woods in-  
side me, to paths

a threatened

severe thought could back

into, slip

away.

Nights, unknowns in my forest grow.

Scarred, vanishing, an outline: my intelligence

watches with blue

cauterizing eyes:

the deer

standing looking into you

immures you.

With her searing

means

of speaking.

ix

he loved  
ever since he was little  
to *hold everything back*, loved it  
as his mother laid him face  
down on the bathroom floor, ministered  
enema after enema.

x

"How many times a  
day  
do you brush? how  
frequently  
eat sweets? this  
floss  
takes fuzzy  
wooly sweaters  
off your teeth."  
He slips into  
a little blue  
mask, for an hour scales,  
finales with flouride;  
dis- and reappears  
munching a bit of his lunch,  
offers you a Ritz that's been  
slipped under (its  
your educated guess)  
limburger.  
Despite your polite  
refusal, he's  
exultant: "This spreadcheese,  
sir/madame, is the  
prize product plaque  
of my hour's gleaning.  
Fill out your cheque, we're  
Captains Cuspid & Canine,  
*Holdng* Company."

xi

he loved  
while he loved me  
to hold everything back: secrets, money,  
semen.

xii

Hands of a woman adjust  
a bunsen flame, insert  
tweezers pinching  
1/20th oz. of gold.  
As it heats, even  
in daylight, you meet  
the eye of a night animal.  
She drops it into my tooth.  
Hands of a man steady  
the pestle, hammer molten gold  
in place- the burnt  
bone fumes  
tactfully  
overridden  
by a hint of  
zanzibar  
on his breath.  
She turns to melt more gold.  
He looks to see if I want it, holds  
precalibrated gas mask  
to my face.  
I laugh  
softly  
into the woods.

Lesson: climbing  
 black cloud. I should  
 level off: the engines'  
 delirium tremens the  
 start of a stall, of an un-  
 circumferential

backspin: *and again*  
*the snapped swingrope, the high-*  
*flying gradeschool girl*  
*subtracts the world, sets it*  
*free.*

Oh, Virginia. "He's

the smartest man I've  
 ever met," one hundred  
 % of them said of  
 white labcoated you.  
 I didn't mean to live as your  
 "little quotient". I meant  
 (Zhivago, Bethune) to live  
 as your wife. You sent me, "the  
 indulger in fiction" off: the shrink  
 doled out non- (how quickly it dated)  
 nonfiction's *Open Marriage*, and downers.  
 Our "prognosis guarded" you practiced  
 discrete math. I buried  
 rings, the logos  
 in two words.

As flight instructor you pry  
 my fingers off the controlwheel: the huge  
 moon smashes

open  
 a higher night. Dark cloud whites  
 to a milk sea.  
 I hear something raw, black: identify  
 my laugh. Our past

goes white,  
 discrete.

xiv

the dentist with a sweet tooth stopped eating my meals, took to vitamins and 3 daily bags of Oreos. by the 3rd bag he'd feel pretty/crazy, try to feed every 2nd cookie to the dog.

for a month after I left he couldn't shit. one day nature was calling loud and clear: he sat there in cold sweat, in pain whether he pushed or-whether he *held everything back*. he was getting dizzy, bleeding.

xv

having practised delivering babies  
he stripped,  
limped  
to the kitchen, laid a bed  
of newspaper on the floor.  
foregoing W.A.S.P. for  
squat position, he groaned, grabbed  
a couple of cupboard doors for support.



xvi

a turning in her tummy.  
the moon's.

as a flat stone along  
flat water- every landing  
a necklace- the moon  
entered her curled up in her  
her forehead breastline thighs  
chained in liquid, jewels.

she doesn't understand doesn't  
recognize its face. in the dark  
she looks to it, her skin  
sheer. taut. silk.

when she lies down it hurts less if  
she eases her knees up:  
the outside of the moon the cragged  
inside of a geode.  
songs come to mind, are minds  
once in her condition.

tonight she is breathing the song  
for Candlemas. the moon melts, slips  
hot milk arms around her waist.  
she coaxes, coaxes  
but it won't lift up  
(what should I say folks, *its darling face?*)

So I ended up living alone the year we'd planned to  
get me pregnant. So what. For the best.  
*Que sera.* The thing was though,  
I'd dream these appallingly  
womanish runes, dream a childface  
floating around at night-  
its brow a Zhivago's, a Bethune's.

xvii

Words to  
dress and  
undress in:  
Diaphanous  
rooms, words.  
Pressed  
into  
sand, snow, bedclothes:  
new images  
of love:  
*intaglios.*

xviii

The snow stops. I want,  
go out into its  
cold pause.

"I thought no one else knew of this road, knew  
they must be run through the imaged night:  
our horses. You give- as she rears, bolts-  
rein to your mare; you write  
the unloosing of all her dark ribbons.

We need not look  
into each other. The same reason  
has us here: in our hands leads  
though we are the image led,  
- the moon Apollo's eye  
looking down upon my slow  
turning to you in your saddle,  
trailed reins tracing  
Iambe's lip lines  
into speechlessness,  
snow."

xix

You barge (Peter peter pumpkin eater,  
had,) three at a time up my stairs.  
My rambunctious puppy lunges,  
covers you with kisses.  
You grab him, yelling.  
I found out I found out, hurl him  
against black fireplace stone. A crack  
of skull or spine, and he lies too still.

You found out, I say in a half voice,  
cradling the hot limp dog.  
My Pride My Name Name Name, and  
your fist  
fires at my skull.

I duck.

You huge, the black tuxedoed bull  
bawling screaming drawing your hand  
back through the broken window.

Woman  
against the  
stained glass.  
Black  
matadoress.

xx

The School of Dentistry '71  
votes you with the sense  
of humour, diplomacy and  
guts, class rep to sit  
on the senate. Among countless  
other battles you "move that  
in Anatomy (after 50  
profcocksucking years)  
it isn't relevant  
that Dents spend 3 months with the Meds  
dissecting and learning The Leg."  
The motion passes. All 40  
of your mates unburdened.  
Two  
think to thank you.

You at home, sunk, in your chair.  
Your background in Psych hasn't  
come to the rescue. I abstract, talk  
about the guy who cured a bunch of  
lepers, about his percentage-wise  
returns. "Yeah, that's nice but it's  
fiction."

Next year they vote  
the guy with testicular  
fortitude  
in again. Behind his back  
they call him MacRasputin.  
My Zhivago. My Bethune.

xxi

I climb four flights, the moment  
I see his face know  
some/everything's gone wrong.  
His hands- better  
at buckling parachutes, at hang  
gliding, at helping all  
manner of women to come-  
have lost between school and  
hours in the house the tiny  
wax tooth cast that took  
discipline to perfect.

Our relationship our writing  
on the wall. Am I  
child or whore in his mind as he  
grasps straw  
words for me: "Use magic, darling,  
use ESP." He says  
my "eyes, a night animal's"  
will find the cast.  
Methodically, mundanely, and only  
because I love him

- out in the rain, out  
on the lawn

they do:

I anticipate his response,  
In the midst of it I hate  
myself, my family line of  
tortuous

(Sidewalk. A shiny  
truck backed up over it.  
In the cab, my dark sad-  
countenanced man.  
Detouring, giving  
a sarabande, a toss to my shawl  
of hair, I kiss  
the hood  
of the truck.)

spanish women.)

His hands viced hard on my hipbones

(hum hum  
run. run from this. this  
is not touch, no.)

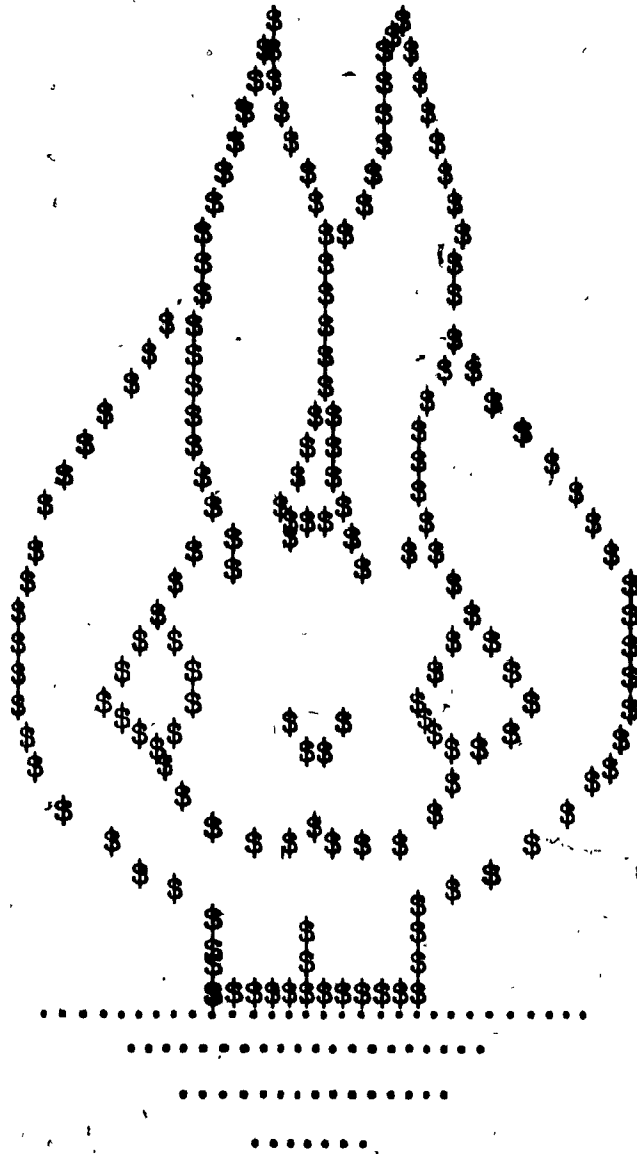
I cry, he ejaculates into the woods.

xxii

*Love*

*is inarticulate*

*like anger.*





xxiv

He pushes (just like on tv) the hidden  
button in the doorframe, walks past  
breadboxlike containers  
for the legged  
but otherwise plundered  
cadavers. He's late as usual, his rabbit  
drugged asleep on his counter.  
He thinks its feet are darling, lucky.  
He doesn't look  
forward to this, under his breath  
breathes Fuck you Rabbit stew.  
He notes the blackboard diagram, scalpels  
into the rabbit's jugular. Its  
anaesthesia worn thin, the rabbit  
screams, convulses. He faints, head  
smashing the counter edge and the floor  
and wakes, encircled by  
40 cheering buddies, to sport  
a black-eye they never let him  
live down.

xxv

Fact. Life's. We can't  
*hold everything back.*

After the *birth* he phoned me,  
described a "5 lb., oreo-black,  
pyramid-shaped turd." I hung up

my wedding rings long ago.

Is there a word for worse  
than Dada, worse than  
kitsch or punk rock?

I dream the feces turned  
to an iron mask,  
visor open. Inside  
are starting violets  
around a giggling  
but child's  
heart.