

I am an old man with barely a tooth and receding gums.  
I would make a poor meal.

ah, it is true, he said sadly,  
without teeth the tendons are tough.  
I would much rather have a tender child,  
with his teeth still in the gum.

then you will not eat me? I quavered.

oh but I must, said the dragon;  
after all,  
a tooth in the mouth is worth two in the gum.

then I awoke,  
crossing the bridge to reality.

-- Victor Lazarow

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

#### SIX YEARS OF AGE

My father is the King  
Of Silence. He floats on a throne  
Of smoke, pale blue messages, like  
Serpents, issue from  
Between his closed lips.

The room is tall, with  
A single huge table placed directly  
At its center. From the  
Floor to the ceiling, each wall is  
Panelled with darkest oak.

In the room adjoining, my  
Mother and sister, the Queen and  
Princess, languidly perform their  
Evening ablutions. There  
Are no slaves in the house.

From a large box in one  
Corner, bombastic and melodious by  
Turns, music and voices alternately  
Foam and chuckle. My father  
Lifts his eye in amusement.

At the table in the center  
Of the room, alone save for the small  
Utensils of my art, I sit  
In easy concentration, making designs  
With colored sand on paper.

Soon the clock on the mantle  
Will strike an indeterminate number  
In an endless sequence of notes,  
And I shall rise from my chair.  
Many kisses shall precede me to bed.

#### How THE FOOTBALL Was BORN

An elephant in swimming trunks  
Was flying through the dark  
Carrying the Earth on his back.

When he got to the edge of the  
Ocean, he stopped, leaned over  
And yelled down to the Chinese  
Gatekeeper who thrives inside  
The boiling core of Everybody's  
Mind. "Hey, give me a hand with  
This tomato, will you?" And the  
Chinaman, himself not unfamiliar  
With childhood, and believing all  
The while it was a balloon, blew  
It up to its present size, the  
  
Shape of which resembles his eyes.

-- Ken Dobel

Santa Rosa, California

the ladies still don't care

the whole thing is over,  
bastards, I've been  
banging the walls for 3 days and 4 nights  
chained in the corner of the room  
in my own  
hardened jism.  
I can't get out to pay the rent  
or buy a paper.  
somebody drunk upstairs  
has been playing the