

But I'll tell you this, Old Fellow
(though I doubt you're over fifty),
I sure as hell can put a stanza back together
better than your young mechanic did my carburetor.

TO DAISY, WITH SPITE

daisy longfellow
was the most beautiful and popular girl
in mrs. botsford's ballroom dancing class.

and i, the faustian over-reacher,
in spite of my bad skin and quivering ego,
was somehow compelled to try to fill as many places
as possible on her saturday evening dance card.
sometimes she condescended
but more often her card was (politely) filled.

dixie, i have no idea how you turned out,
but we're both in our mid-thirties now

and i wonder if you're still all-booked
for every dance.

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

i'd fooled around with her some years before,
but the only reason i now sat down with her
was because there weren't any other
vacant seats in the bar.

so this guy had to start putting the make on her
and i didn't care if he slipped it to her
right there on the table
but he thought i cared
and i knew he thought i cared
and i knew that he was barging in
even though he thought i cared

and i began to get pissed off
just at the principle of the thing.

maybe he sensed that
or maybe it was just that she was doing such
a good job of warding him off,

but anyway just about the time i was deciding
i'd have to give him a poke in the snoot,

he finally left the bar.

i felt bad then
that i hadn't done anything.
i had a couple more drinks
and then i was sure i would never
for the rest of my life
forgive myself
for not having gotten into it with him.

the next morning,
when i woke up,
my first thought was,

"thank god i didn't bother with that guy!"

AN OCCASIONAL POET

Ten years ago my good friend
Patricia Hamilton Dominique Esme O'Connor Cherin
has her first poem published in Wormwood Review.
I still think that it was an excellent poem.
It was called, I believe, "The Night I Was Donna Reed,"
and it was about her dreams
and their violation by reality,
especially by the reality of a doctor
she was briefly in love with.

The point of all this
is that she wrote a second poem a few years ago
and it is on the wall of her bathroom
and I can't get her to send it out
so I'm incorporating it into this poem
without her permission
because I think her second poem is her second great poem,
and, don't worry, she isn't the sort to sue any of us.

The poem is entitled, "William of Orange,"
and it goes:

William eats oranges.
William is an orange.

For my money, Esme's still batting 1000.