Dinner For Two

He was very fat
and played the piano. He
said he wanted to write music
for some of my poems.
All the while he ordered
a gourmet dinner for two
and stuffed down his
steak (rare), baked potatoes
with sour cream and chives
and ate his buttered peas
and all the rolls for two,
explaining in between mouthfuls
that he was a morning alcoholic
and an evening drunk.
When the meal was over
we went into the bar
and he ordered two King Alphonse's
which we drank at a little
round table
that made him look even larger.
He began to talk about
how life would be
when we were married
how much he loved me
and he even cried.
I started crying too.
When I looked back up at him
he seemed to look more like a
rhinoceros
and I knew no court in the world
would allow such matrimonial
differences.
After our drinks he went over
and played the piano bar.
It was the last night I saw him.

I Turn To Bone And Other Stones

sometimes when I am
sitting with the lean dogs
the poems come;
not because
I have expected them
or needed them; not because
I am clever
or literary,
but because the light
of the room
turns to bone
and the mad animals

are famished.
what should be remembered
is -- it takes very little
to live or die or love
and less
to write a poem.
don't make it seem
more than this.
what I call poetry
you may call my escape,
but surely
whatever it is
leads us all
to the same absurdity
for which none of us
can be blamed.

Tropical Fish

My cousin sits in his
beautiful Spanish house,
his wife gone, his children
reduced to visitors.
The tropical fish
swim dreamily in the tank
as though nothing
had changed.
My cousin's new freedom
is nineteen years old
and makes love to him
on the shag carpet
that took so long to buy.
When she leaves him
he will go on
feeding the fish.
He has learned a lot
in the last few months.

When It Doesn't Matter

The fish on the worm
and the worm on the hook and you
hanging onto the pole
and the boat holding you
and the water keeping it afloat
and something underneath
which I have neither time
nor interest
in telling you about.