

she left the room to find the janitor, to explain what it was of hers that needed fixing, what it was exactly that she couldn't fit the plug into. she returned to class a tearful but a wiser woman.

which reminds me of a piece of profound advice imparted to me by a young professor upon the occasion of my going forth from graduate school: "remember, locklin," he said, his hand upon my tweedy shoulder, "in teaching you are always dealing with the criminal mentality."

a later poem for maureen

i've been obsessed with it of late,  
that picture of maureen, our love-child in her arms,  
she still upon the operating table,  
slightly dopey, but relieved of pain,

transfigured.  
they took a snapshot of her,  
and her face was clean and sharp and radiant;  
it shone a rodent innocence.

mo, life is not as clean and sharp  
as your smile in that radiant instant;  
still, how did i make it go away,  
that unifying flash?

a paragraph from the financial page

i sometimes fall into a lamentable habit  
of post-talkshow newspaper perusal.  
i tope a few last drinks and linger over  
batting averages, illiterate letter-writers,

and the latest recipe for le poulet parisienne.  
the other night i came upon an interview  
with a successful financier. he'd written  
a best-seller on the stock market

and his first principle was simple:  
pick a blue chip; buy it; keep it.  
well, that rang a bell,  
because my aunt elizabeth

(i called her lebou) hit upon  
that same controlling notion back when  
the baby brownie was still just a gleam  
in george eastman's irises.

oldest of fourteen kids, a practical nurse,  
without the benefit of economics courses,  
she simply sank her earnings  
into kodak stock. even during the depression,

she would generously relieve her grateful relatives  
of badly depreciated paper.

she died two years ago at eighty-seven,  
worth about two hundred thousand bucks.

(it took me just about a year to blow  
the ten grand after taxes left to me -- wives and  
kids and friends and girlfriends ... and europe.)  
i even donated ten dollars to a little magazine.)

well, anyway, there are important lessons buried here  
about america, the little guy, and common sense.  
unfortunately i've been overeducated -- it will take  
a simpler mind than mine to point them out.

#### a theresa trilogy

##### i.

in spite of frequent showerings,  
she always smells of hamburger.  
fortunately i love ground meat, and i  
love my little short order cook.

i would like to smother her  
in ketchup onions mustard pickle  
garlic melted cheese ortega chilis.  
i think she might stick to my ribs.

##### ii.

her grandfather had a bad heart  
so her grandmother harped upon the uncut grass  
until he dragged his ass outside, yanked the  
power mower alive, and died.

at the funeral she was furious.  
she said it was just like him  
to die first and leave her with  
the burial expenses.