

and having read at an early age a biography of dylan
thomas,

he decided it would be sexy as hell to be a poet.

as other men do a hundred pushups,
he wrote a hundred poems a day.
he submitted them to magazines
in batches of two hundred.
at first his attempts to become published
met with disappointment.
but after he founded his own mimeo press,
which specialized in the publication of other editors,
that all changed overnight.
he also wrote essays which redefined poetry
as precisely the sort of stuff he wrote himself.
he wanted to give the school of verse he had launched
(although the terms "school" and "verse" were customarily
anathema to him)
a name, but most of the good names were taken.
he settled for "prong poetry."

soon he had published hundreds of thousands of poems
in tens of thousands of chapbooks.
practice only makes perfect
if it has something promising to start with,
but he did improve a little.
it was no longer possible
not to take him seriously.
he had become a poet by attrition.
he disposed of his scattered critics
with ad hominem volleys: they were fairies
or stuffed shirts or jealous or profs.
young poets who were bad to begin with
became even worse in imitation of him.
he became the token entry from the avant-garde
in trade anthologies.

he figured prominently in contemporary literary histories.

now all he had to fear was the judgement
of readers he would be too dead to manhandle.

ATRIUM-SCHMATRIUM

my girlfriend tells me that colette
said too great a concentration of human beings
makes plants suffocate.

i find the converse to be likewise true.