but i run the scalding water anyway
and lower my ignominy into it

and stare at a copy of a moveable feast,
first one of the fitzgerald chapters
and then the one about ezra pound's bel esprit movement
to free major eliot from lloyd's bank,

and it is the paris to which i have been
and about which i have written
and to which, before the recent financial hiroshimas,
i had hoped to introduce my children,

and suddenly, in spite of everything,
i'm happy.

LETTERS AND SCIENCE

The brochure for the new course advertised it
as a "Metrics Workshop."

Thank God, I sighed, at last I'll be getting
a few students who can tell an iamb
from something you use to hold a door open.

Naturally it turned out to be
a matter of inches and centimeters.

THINK TINY AND CARRY A BIG STICK

tiny tim was on the johnny carson show the other night.
it was obvious he had come down in the world,
but the discernible aspects of his decline
were not sufficient to account for
the vehemence of the audience's reaction to him:
they hooted and giggled and pointed and stomped
like a bunch of midwest grammarschoolers
at a carny sideshow.
had there been any chance of their being
allowed on stage,
i really think they would have done
serious physical harm to him.
at the very least, they would have tweaked his nose,
or pulled his hair
or panted him
or given him the adolescently feared pinkbelly.

always the gentleman,
johnny tried by example to convey to them
how anyone of the least sophistication
or compassion or good humor or good will
might be expected to comport himself
in the presence of a tiny tim,
but he only succeeded in confusing them.
they couldn't imagine why in the world
he wasn't joining in the fun.

just ten years ago, responding to tiny tim
was to a whole generation
the touchstone of open-mindedness,
of a liberation from puritanism,
of live-and-let-live.

how far we've slipped back towards the slime.

-- Gerald Locklin
Long Beach  CA

DEAD AGAIN

Ben phoned and said, "there's a rumor going around that you're dead. HUSTLER magazine has gotten 3 or 4 calls
about that.
"Well," I said, "maybe the dead can't tell, maybe I'm
dead...."

5 years ago somebody started it:
"Bukowski's dead."

Now it's beginning again.
They want me dead very much.
I seem to be very much on the minds of the
death-wishers.
It's irritating to some
that a man nearing sixty
continues to write.
It should give them hope instead of
rancor.

I'll die, my friends, I have no doubt of
that