

THANK YOU ELIZABETH TAYLOR

for surviving the Hollywood  
under your nails  
all those Eddie Fisher records  
skipping in your head  
the Richard Burton years  
echoing in your best screams  
the uncorked bottles  
the pills by the nightstand  
the excessive weight  
the plastic surgery  
the heavy makeup  
the chicken bone in your throat  
thank you for not dying  
for not being destroyed  
by those two Oscars  
a comedian's joke  
your husband's campaign lies  
and for telling the world  
that Lawrence Harvey  
was your dearest friend  
when nobody else could stand him

thank you for making distinctions  
for not committing suicide  
when everyone was writing poems  
to a dead Marilyn Monroe

HIGH WIRE ACT OVER CALIFORNIA

the corporate analyst  
who is on my left  
says he's finally willing  
to interface with others  
about the upfront space he's into  
simply because  
he's mellowed out  
seen things come down  
and has flashed on himself  
so many times  
that he knows precisely  
where he's at

the stockbroker by accident  
who is on my right  
says he knows exactly  
where the corporate analyst

is coming from  
he's been there and back  
and his own high energy trips  
have helped him get into  
at  
behind  
and around the heaviness  
to the point where  
anything off the wall now  
blows him away

sitting between them  
and still unable to find myself  
I interrupt  
just to ask what the rules are

#### JIMMY DURANTE IS DEAD

the hell he's dead  
I had dinner with him last night  
down at Piano Pete's  
and he picked up the tab  
jesus christ  
he can't be dead  
I'm telling you  
we sat right across from each other  
he had the veal  
and I had the cannelloni  
Eddie Cantor was our waiter  
does that sound dead?  
he talked about President Hoover  
he told stories about his nose  
he laughed a lot  
and bought drinks for everybody  
you call that dead?  
he did his soft-shoe routine  
for christ's sake  
right in front of the bar  
he had us all in stitches  
I should know  
I was there wasn't I?  
he did inka dinka doo at the piano  
cocking his hat neatly  
over his right eye  
surrounded by assassins  
that's what he said  
pretending he was really pissed  
ripping apart the piano  
just for laughs