

about street people?  
Harvard students can't afford to tip  
until they graduate  
street people & Harvard students  
want the same thing  
the students are just a little more  
disgusting about it

#### THE PRESIDENT

black is such an inaccurate word  
like negro was before it  
you had red hair & green eyes  
but you were a nigger all the same  
to them honkies  
who turned your stint in the Army  
into something unspeakable  
you'd be 83 today  
conditional tense of course  
because you were only 49  
when the end came  
you were one of the greatest tenor men  
of all time  
your imitators walked away with the bread  
while you sat at the window drinking gin  
& listening to Sinatra  
Lester Young  
you were too gentle for this planet  
happy birthday anyway

#### OUT BACK

there are a number of parking lots  
two houses with backyards  
& of course a back street or two  
it's quiet now  
every day two trucks idle  
on one of the back streets  
it's a loud droning sound  
sort of like a chainsaw  
it's been going on for months  
this is the car theft capital  
out back late at night  
someone's car alarm will kick in for hours  
during the day  
a little girl in one of those houses  
screams as though she were being tortured  
maybe that's what's happening  
at 5:30 or 6 in the morning  
someone honks repeatedly

that's usually followed by  
an animated conversation  
between 2 women  
as though it were high noon  
there are cats & raccoons & squirrels  
back there  
sometimes they clash  
one tenant likes to warm up his engine  
early in the morning  
the fumes & sounds come right thru  
our bedroom window  
sleep around here  
is strictly hit or miss

M D

I was blocking a driveway for just a second  
while I ran into the apartment hallway  
in search of my passengers  
I never made it  
someone was already honking to get into the driveway  
there was nowhere else to go  
except into that driveway  
he followed me in & parked  
got out of his car  
& walked into the house  
now I'M stuck in his yard  
my passenger next door waiting  
a few minutes later he emerged with wife  
they got into the car & left  
I cancelled the call to the cops  
to have him towed from his own driveway  
the guy never said a word to me  
he had one of those Uncle Eph beards  
an M D designation on his plate  
made me wonder how he treated his patients

I UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION NOW

women want love  
men want respect  
kids want attention  
most people want lots of money  
animals want people to stay away  
pets want people to never leave  
plants want water  
& on it goes  
this guy who used to live with us  
until he died  
at the age of 25