

OPEN LETTER TO A CLOSED MIND

I make too much of it, this matter of books
and talk and silences, but every sun
I stand less sure of what I ought to know
and find my way to them to find my way.
Wisdom's rabbit races just far enough
ahead to keep the chase invitingly close
but never done, and all I really know
is what occurs to me right here as right.
Moments of truth come anywhere at once.

Facing the jewelry of bottles twiced
by mirrors fanned behind a downtown bar
in Minneapolis, I understood a verse
from Crane's *The Wine Menagerie* without
intending it. The meaning simply *came*,
like *that*—like one of God's gratuities
that come before we are prepared. Of all
I ever worked to learn, those things are best
that came without my earning them.

I should have said without *deserving* them.
In Minneapolis a deeper thinker
surely would have called all truth a gift,
but it was hot, and I forgot. Later,
when students let me tell them what I knew,
I saw that all we keep of truth is what

we give away, that holocausts can sleep
like revolutions in the smallest flints,
that any river can reflect the sun.

I have a student's fear that truth is fun
to seek but death to keep. Heroes and saints
are those who freed the thoughts of God by pen
or tongue and made them last like Parthenons.
I bleed the lambs of glory for those few
who said that time must wait their christening.
In the presence of their absence, words take flesh,
and God wakes fires that can rock the skull
and blaze the eye with revelation.