“A READING IN UNLOVE”
Author Unknown

Once on yellow paper with green lines
He wrote a poem
And he called it “Chaps” because
That was the name of his dog,
And that’s what it was all about.
And his teacher gave him an “A”
And his mother hung it on the kitchen door
And read it to his aunts
That was the year Reverend Tracy took all
The kids to the zoo
And let them sing on the bus;
And that was the year his baby sister was born
With tiny toenails and no hair
And his mother and father kissed a lot
And the girl around the corner sent him a valentine
And signed it with rows of X’s
And his father always tucked him in bed at night
And was always there to do it.

Once on white paper with green lines
He wrote a poem
And he called it “Autumn” because that
Was the name of the season,
And that’s what it was all about.
And his teacher gave him an “A” and told him
To write more clearly.
And his mother never hung it on the kitchen door
Because it had just been painted;
And the kids told him that Reverend Tracy smoked cigars
And left the butts in the pews.
That was the year his sister got glasses with
Thick lenses and black frames.
And the girl around the corner laughed when he went to
See Santa Claus at Macy’s
And the kids told him why his mother and father
Kissed a lot.
And his father never tucked him in bed at night
And got mad when he cried for him to do it.
Once on a paper torn from his notebook
  He wrote a poem
And he called it “Question Marked Innocence”
Because that was the name of his girl
  And that’s what it was all about.
And his professor gave him an “A”
  And a strange and steady look.
And his mother never hung it on the kitchen door
  Because he never let her see it.
That was the year Reverend Tracy died
And he forgot how the end of the Apostle Creed went
And he caught his sister necking on the back porch
And his mother and father never kissed anymore
  Or never even talked.
And the girl around the corner wore too much make-up
  And made him cough when he kissed her.
And at 3:00 a.m. he tucked himself in bed,
  His father snoring soundly ….

That’s why on the back of a pack of matches
  He tried another poem
And he called it absolutely nothing
  Because that was what it was all about
And he gave himself an “A”
And a slash on each damned wrist
And hung it on the bathroom door
  Because he couldn’t reach the kitchen.