

SONG TO ANOTHER CAROLYN

I

Say, "To mend this world is [her] religion"
 (so to paraphrase Great Penn),
 to praise and pray to *l'ange humain*,
when like Zola she gazes on the Stygian,
when like Gorky plumbs *The Lower Depths*,
 nonetheless to raise a *gaude*
 to wealth of life and good embodied,
though greed has done the dirty, and poverty has wept.

II

Not the artist's job, to juice you like a fruit,
 squeezing tears with happenings
billed as, "powerful, compelling, dissolute."
Tragedy is fated, given men and things;
 so should be the odd reprieve.
Old Man Bean, expiring with his sentence, wrings
out breaths without the drug in prison he received.
 Schools said to help Little Girl Bean
take her shining genius for deficiency.
But starving Baby Bean skips his sad death scene,
 laughing as pathos succumbs to sense.
Mom discovers food banks; so, the gods intervene.

III

And what of Asphalt Man, whose work it is
 to tar the landscape over?
His suit and tie, his hair, his eyes,
 his thoughts are asphalt-colored.
A tempting target, with his new-built villa,
 but who would stoop to fire?
His bride is paralyzed. Was he the driver?
Somehow he must pay: anxious, stumbling, mired.

IV

Honest and honorable author,
make rich and poor kindred, show at a glance
all suffer from that which makes man suffer;
serve truth, triumphant enemy of chance.