Newman Self As Informant – 5

IT BIDS PRETTY FAIR

The play seems out for an almost infinite run.

Don't mind a little thing like the actors fighting.

The only thing I worry about is the sun.

We'll be all right if nothing goes wrong with the lighting.

Robert Frost

MY PAPA'S WALTZ

The whisky on your breath Could make a small boy dizzy; But I hung on like death: Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans Slid from the kitchen shelf; My mother's countenance Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist Was battered on one knuckle; At every step you missed My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head With a palm caked hard by dirt; Then waltzed me off to bed Still clinging to your shirt.

Theodore Roethke

FORGOTTEN LANGUAGE

Once I spoke the language of the flowers,
Once I understood each word the caterpillar said,
Once I smiled in secret at the gossip of the starlings,
And shared a conversation with the housefly
in my bed.

Once I heard and answered all the questions

of the crickets,

And joined the crying of each falling dying

flake of snow,

Once I spoke the language of the flowers....

How did it go? How did it go?

Shel Silverstein

NIMBLE RAYS OF DAY BRING OXYGEN
TO HER BLOOD

After the sponge bath Spice cake and coffee In a sky blue china cup

Tiny clouds float by Like bits of soap In a bowl of very blue water

A happy baby sleeps In a silky chamber Of my wife's lovely body

A leaf spins itself
The leaf's a roof
Over the trembling flower

Everything's safe there
Because nothing that breathes
Air is alone in the world

Tom Clark

MY GRANDMOTHER

My grandmother used to save her best night dresses for the hospital.

"If I get sick," she'd say "I want to look respectable."

She died in the hospital wearing a johnny shirt.

The night dresses, so carefully folded, lay undisturbed in her dresser drawer.

Mary Jane Cadegan

DETAIL

The ruined stone house has an old apple tree left there by the farmer whatever else he took with him It bears fruit every year gone wild and wormy with small bitter apples nobody eats even children know better I passed that way on the road to Trenton twice a month all winter long noticing how the apples clung in spite of hurricane winds sometimes with caps of snow little golden bells And perhaps none of the other travellers looked that way but I make no parable of them they were there and that's all For some reason I must remember and think of the leafless tree and its fermented fruit one week in late January when wind blew down the sun and earth shook like a cold room no one could live in with zero weather soundless golden bells alone in the storm

Al Purdy