

The Book

(In memory of A.M.P., died April 24, 1970)

Dying,
You mumble constantly
The Book.
Lilt
The Blue Danube Waltz;
A hymn in Latin.
Prattle
About a legacy;
A dead child;
Repeat
(At urgent intervals)
The Book.
Your fingers
(Knuckled callipers)
Explore
Embroidered roses
On the coverlet;
Have trouble
Picking them.
Silent,
I look and listen,
Though I would not
Listen,
Look.
Again
You mumble urgently
The Book. . . .
Your breathing
Thickens.

Sickens.
Quickens.
Pauses.
Stops.
I take away
The pillows;
Close
Your eyes,
Your mouth.
And competently
Place
The Book
In place.