

A Hard Night's Daze

"You're very normal for a poet,"
The girl beside me said. "I know it,"
I answered her, "but normally speaking
No poet is normal normally speaking."

"I mean to say" (she said) "you're *sober*."
(Fragrant, fragile; who'll unrobe her?
When? and where? and how? I pondered)
"No poet is pure," I said, and wandered

Back to where poet-colleagues drank
Themselves to stupefaction; sank
In their lost cause of selfhood; cursed
Themselves and others in terse bursts

Of savage, half-coherent talk:
Brittle; dispensable as chalk.
Are truth and selfhood so compounded
That poets must be self-confounded?

Is verse such enervating fare
It makes its frenzied makers tear
Themselves to shreds? (self-therapists,
Profoundly and profusely pissed).

Was Rimbaud right to quit the game
Of rhyming? should I do the same?
Join-in the pub-crawl jamboree
In *alter ego* ecstasy?

The sober fact is, win or lose,
I haven't got the taste for booze.
O pardon me, my friends, my vice
Of being so dissolutely *nice*.