

EULOGY FOR AN ACTOR

Oh no, he's not dead yet. He's even making
another movie. It's called "Know Thyself."
"To thine own self be true"
is one of his lines. The sort of stuff
Hal's resonant perfection delivers nonpareil.

Maybe all the world's Hals
find their natural habitat in theater.
Being (as in human),
only comes with some other name,
some other lifeline. Only then can such men
swagger and swear, cry and die with greatness.

Hal's coach called him a genius
at eighteen. With professional verve
his mentor still hoists the cliché:
"Hal becomes each role he plays."

Easy. There is no significant other.
Credit cards, social security number,
an Oscar-- all attest there's a Hal Halloran
(born Halbert Hagneyer). They lie.

Hal is
clock parts, a smorgasbord of heros and heels
knowing flawlessly who they are.
Hal is
calendars of screen time, entrances and exits,
costume changes, press clippings.
It's hard to love a man with no flesh
on the bones of a single truth.

Post script, he decomposes
in a custom decorated set: his mansion,
his yacht, his mountain chalet. Even he
can't remember all the titles of his films
or the characters who famed him and framed him
in the dimensions of two generations' knowing.

Silkily, he ravel's out of his fifth marriage,
skillfully playing out the last loose ends
of what he never was.