

REFLECTIONS OF A SEASHORE WEEKEND THIRTY YEARS PAST

Unwilling even then to serve their sticky eyes,
Normal they perched high on the ^{hotel} veranda, peering down
Like buzzards at his differentness, making buzzard sounds,
Snatching him up with grainy tongues to volley him
Like a hare hide between them—then on to those on the beach
Sharing sameness, secure in naked nonentity enough
To peel him with clumsy questions and unskilled pointing.

No matter now if that day that nine-year-old
Had taken off hot anonimity and gone ignoring
To the ocean's feet, felt wind and foam,
Played with sand and periwinkles. Instead
He tested his artless camouflage, untrusted in water;
He ran back to his parents' room where
Other children's winged joy attacked walls and windows,
Where he wished his flaw were deafness, invisible, unstrange—
Or worse—from which eyes swerve,
Quick-blessed look-away and let-alone— anything
To keep their curiosity and distaste from surfacing like sweat,
Dripping down on him, lodging lye in his pores.

No matter now that he owns the old hotel, the beach,
Some of the people— a man leached out inside a man:
One in patented laminate, coated with success. The other,
Unwhole and unholy, no one has yet seen.