

THE BOTTOM LINE AT THE A-1 SESTINA STAR STUDIO  
Glenna Holloway

Today we're talent scouting for six words,  
Each one elite enough to pose six times  
Spot-lit in unremitting bas-relief--  
(Well, three get buried in the last scene's core.)  
What verve they need, what icy windshield nerve!  
Why, Dun & Bradstreet ought to list such worth.

See, once we hire 'em, we pay market worth--  
Less agency per cent, of course. Some words  
Hit big then burn out way too fast; the nerve  
Of one renown pronoun is frizzed at times.  
All adjectives get raveled to the core.  
Sometimes we have to splint 'em for relief.

At Central Casting, understand, relief  
And benefits depend on proven worth.  
We look for natural pith, a solid core  
Of muscled guts when we audition words.  
It takes incisive grit and New York Times  
Know-how to rabbit punch or tweak a nerve.

Forget soft female endings lacking nerve.  
We want raw drama. Comedy relief.  
So even if you jiggle with the times,  
You're still obliged to make a sentence worth  
The cost of space, and TOP all other words.  
Such heights expose clichés of hollow core.

Yeah, it's a jungle, baby. Sugar core  
~~Recitals full of candy corn pall nerve-~~  
Ends nineteen-nineties wired for mach-four words.  
If you can't make the cut, go on relief.  
We've got to get our modern Webster's worth,  
No one can shine with shades of former times.

Who's next? No imitations, please. Prime time's  
Decided shock is in, the hardest core  
Of all, the unclothed truth has gained in worth  
As much as fiction when some well-paid nerve  
Grabs center stage. And bored fans want relief  
With extra violence voicing-over words.

But hey, you has-been words, at certain times  
You're pure relief for overloaded core  
And ruckled nerve. At last-- you may have worth.