

ABOUT MY NEIGHBOR, LORD

It's hard to love him, Lord.
As long as he's the crowd we call mankind
I can feel something for his disadvantaged state,
his lack of freedom or his hunger pangs.
But give him riches, give him a tongue,
one that duels with mine, give him eyes that lust,
hands that grasp, flaws and face so different--
It's hard to love him, Lord.

Harder still when he curses, steals,
rapes and kills. I try to recall
his children's cries and his elders'
search for crumbs of hope. I try to say
"There but for thee go I."
But oh-- it's hard to love him, Lord.

It's easy to condemn him, Lord, say "pearls
before swine," avoid your second great command
and retreat to my hearth, the comfort of my kind.

But that makes me a victim too--
of the tyranny of class, possessions, random place
and that most clever one who smiles when I forget
the role model you provided. Forgive me, Lord,
when I rationalize and ration kindness...

It must be hard to love me, Lord