

*Three Strikes*

That's right  
I'm back for a third time

this is the first poem  
from my third book of poetry

I'm not rich or famous yet  
rather,  
I'm poor and unknown

but that's alright  
I don't want to blow my load  
too soon

there is no reason  
to get all hot and heavy with money  
then be 40 and broke

I don't expect to  
make money from poetry  
but I'm writing for  
two literary mags now  
and it keeps the wallet  
fat and happy

so I can continue  
staying up all night  
writing poems

the elevation of  
my celebrity  
extends to getting  
free soft-serve  
at the local  
ice cream parlor

every once in  
a while I'll  
get a letter in  
the mail with  
a nude photograph

of a thirteen-year-old  
girl inside

but mainly  
I'm a blue collar  
poet

working blue collar jobs  
born and bred in a blue collar state  
writing about non-conformity  
but conforming so I can continue  
to exhaust my ability  
as a free poet  
like a rubber band  
about to snap-

I'm not writing  
as much poetry as  
I used to

been working on the novel  
whatever that means

the documentation  
of a bum ballplayer

I hear:  
"Why aren't you writing as much?  
"Where's the new poems?"

and I say:  
"Hold out, baby.  
I'm working on something big."

they look at me  
with a passing respect  
like I was once great  
but not anymore

that these days  
I couldn't write myself  
out of a brown paper bag

they could run circles around  
an old rump  
like me

piss on them,  
I am a Greek god

I am an astronaut  
a juggernaut

a stallion  
a mustang  
a lion

here is my kingdom  
and I can  
shit where I eat

and paw the  
smoke filled curtains

and eat my  
zebras raw