

## Test for Poets

Who can describe beauty in institutions.

Who can pay honest tribute to their buccolic scenes  
of lush fields and clear streams.

Who can so reduce the terror inside  
to permit its physical appreciation outside.

Who can view the scatological in relation to its  
tautological---not its villainy?

Who will attempt to discuss the humanitarian ethos  
in terms of:

asylums  
custody  
totalization

Who is so capable that he may bring dignity to such  
words as:

inmate  
patient  
material

Who is so sensitive, and insensitive, as to drive from  
his mind:

the back ward  
the day room  
the non-school school

Is there a poet----has there ever been one----so brave,  
so fine, so wise that he dared:

to squeeze out the truth until it appeared as a lie  
to be so objective as to be beyond reality  
to stare down evil and find goodness

Are there men---is there a human being---who can  
detach themselves from passion and prejudice,

Who can write a true account of life in the institution,  
who can write about:

the good as well as the evil  
the beauty with the horror  
the profound asylum and the vivid confinement

Is there one person not of the establishment---  
and not of the reformists--- whose axes are ground and whose  
battles are won:

who can take distance and yet have compassion  
who is neither frightened of evil nor awed by goodness  
who can forgive ~~anything~~ and nothing

Is there a poet with words so true, with a mind so clear,  
and soul so deep that:  
    he comprehends the incomprehensibility of asylums  
    his language permits new understandings  
    we accept his words as deeds

If there is such a poet why are you hiding?  
If there is such a poet, he would appear.  
If there is such a poet, why fear exposure?  
If there is such a poet, he'd not be afraid.

Some day, some where a man will be known  
Who will teach us of life, of beauty, and evil  
Who will help us unfold the meanings of things  
And will cause us to learn that there is a design.

He will teach us that; i  
    in spite of the back wards  
    in spite of the inmates  
    in spite of the evil  
The design for each of us holds nothing but good.