

They can crack up the car and still pay for the damage!
My adoring wife has by now gone through graduate school
three times, the study wall papered with diplomas.

Until, one chance day,
on a sidewalk in front of some enterprise, a pharmacy, say,
or deli in a suburb of Philly, Topeka, Seattle,
a familiar fellow (oneself I sing!) dissolves
into the brick wall when I pass by.

The next morning, when I bend to wash my face
in the bathroom sink, a stranger appears
in the steamy mirror,
wearing my new clothes.

Michael Chandler

REMEMBERING MR. MARTIN: A FARMER

The corn husk stands about a foot high,
the harvest bone picked clean. An Indian canoe
carries your spirit toward winter. A candle
turns sumac into rubies along the edge of your field.
Your corn feeds hogs whose hearts glow in the mud,
like your plow in the dark of the barn.
The rocks remember how you sat down.
Their lack of fear, a gift you held at death.
Your breath joins the wind,
praising the earth from the tops of trees.
Many times you opened the earth with your plow;
Now earth opens her arms to you.
Remembering each of your footsteps
she washes your feet for the journey ahead.