The deconstructionist’s shame

this is a poem

it is a poem about the difficulty of being a poet

this was supposed to be an erotic poem

it may still be, sort of somewhat

but mainly, this is a test of my ability to write proudly

i’m sitting in my usual coffeeshop

in a high-traffic area

surrounded by other customers,

sitting, walking, standing at the magazine shelves

almost any one of them could be reading over my shoulder

with this in mind, i have decided

to write a poem that will be both honest and shocking

the poem will serve as a metaphor for the greater question:

why would anyone want to advertise himself as a poet

in a world which has no respect for poets?

it is very hard to offend

simply writing scatologically won’t do it

everyone has heard every dirty word a hundred thousand times

therefore, in order to be shocking

i must remove the merely scatological

and replace it with the embarrassingly personal

i just did a quick shoulder check

i couldn’t help it

it seems no one is reading my screen right now

time to plunge in

there is an element of braggadocio

in writing about sex

it is good to be known as a sexual person

there is no element of pride, however

in what this poem is about

i wish to write about masturbation

specifically, mine

i wish to poeticize about masturbation

as i cannot masturbate about poetry for you

many poets will say they write personally, for themselves

those of them who aren’t lying are making a case for poetic masturbation

i don’t write for myself

i write to impress you, to change you, to entertain you

and to garner the ego-enhancement that comes with success

my poetry is sex

and you are my girl, get used to it, it doesn’t stop there

next, in my own defence, i will announce loudly

That I Have A Beautiful Female Partner Whom I Love

And Our Sex Is Laudable.

however, she lives apart from me

and in order to meet my daily physical urges

i resort to self-satisfaction when my love is absent

she knows this and encourages it

but for some reason, it continues to embarrass me on occasion

perhaps i’m a bit of a prude

admitting to masturbation is to admit to inadequacy

like admitting to poetry is to admit to not writing a novel

men don’t want to be known as masturbators

nor do men don’t want to be known as poets

my poetry is not masturbation

and my masturbation is not particularly poetic

it wouldn’t be that interesting to watch

perhaps i make funny faces or sounds

i don’t know, really

sometimes it goes on forever

linearly or in waves

other times i’ve barely gotten started when i’m finished

luckily, i don’t have to apologize to myself for that

oddly, although i’m right-handed, i use my left hand more than my right

perhaps i’m leaving open the possibility of making notes

this is amusing/embarrassing for you, but don’t get me wrong:

i love it, i need it

i look forward to that small section

of each otherwise solitary day

that is devoted just to myself

the pleasure, of course, does not compare to that of sex

but is a pleasure nonetheless

perhaps in another poem i will attempt to describe the thrill of erection

the rightness of slippery friction

the mounting tingling that marks the path to orgasm

the joy of contraction and emission

the peace of rest

i will tell you of all that and more

but that is not what this poem is about, is it, you horny toad you?

now the final analysis:

by admitting to and claiming joy in

something that almost all men hide

and that many women are unimpressed with

i have made this poem shocking

you will see yourselves in this poem

and either agree or reject

it doesn’t matter, you are affected

you, reader/listener, must grant me the credit

that I am, in spite of my manhood,

admitting to what i should deny, or at least hide

i won’t pretend this is easy

but it must be done

the question now is

am i talking about poetry or masturbation?