

BALLAD OF AN INTELLECTUAL

Listen, you morons great and small
 to the tale of an intellectuall
 (and if you don't profit by his career
 don't ever say Hoover gave nobody beer).

'Tis frequently stated out where he was born
 that a rose is as weak as its shortest thorn:
 they spit like quarters and sleep in their boots
 and anyone dies when somebody shoots
 and the sheriff arrives after everyone's went;
 which isn't, perhaps, an environment
 where you would (and I should) expect to find
 overwhelming devotion to things of the mind.
 But when it rains chickens we'll all catch larks
 —to borrow a phrase from Karl the Marks.

As a child he was puny; shrank from noise
 hated the girls and mistrusted the boise,
 didn't like whisky, learned to spell
 and generally seemed to be going to hell;
 so his parents, encouraged by desperation,
 gave him a classical education
 (and went to sleep in their boots again
 out in the land where women are main).

You know the rest: a critic of note,
 a serious thinker, a lyrical pote,
 lectured on Art from west to east
 —did sass-seyeity fall for it? Cheast!
 if a dowager balked at our hero's verse
 he'd knock her cold with a page from Jerse;
 why, he used to say to his friends, he used
 "for getting a debutante give me Prused"
 and many's the heiress who's up and swooned
 after one canto by Ezra Pooned
 (or—to borrow a cadence from Karl the Marx—
 a biting chipmunk never barx).