

## IN THE FIFTY-FIRST YEAR OF THE TOAD

all the aches and pains and illnesses  
and indispositions that used to come and  
go,

came and stayed.

## THE DAY AFTER HE HAS BEEN PLACED IN A FULL-BODY CAST

his horoscope reads,

"come out of your shell."

## THANKS FOR REMINDING ME

hearing that an unknown arsonist  
has tried to burn down my house,

the creative writing student's  
automatic and absolutely predictable

response was, "well, at the very least  
you ought to be able to get a

short story out of it.'

## THE CONDEMNED MAN'S LAST SUPPER

i think i would demand an exact replication  
of a seven-course sunday dinner i enjoyed  
at vince prestianni's house in 1958,  
prepared by his mother, nellie,  
presided over by his father, biagio,  
and enlivened by his kid brother, benny.

if they turned me down for that feast  
(and, to tell the truth,  
who could duplicate it?)  
i guess i'd settle for  
any decent plate of

spaghetti and meat balls,  
spaghetti and italian sausage,  
or spaghetti and mushrooms.

i don't think, at that juncture.  
i should concern myself much  
about fiber.