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One Ree-Deep (No Charge)

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ONE REE-DEEP (NO CHARGE)

Sears Roebuck gave him to me
free with a TV set.
The salesman called me back:
“Mr. Dickey, here, take this.”
A two-and-a-half-foot frog
holding a daisy.

Embarrassed, I got a sack
for him, but when I stopped
next door, in a ratty bar,
there, poking out at me
was the incredible top
of his wide plush face.

If I had children, he
would belong to them
and they would explain him. He’s
not right in my careful house
full of pre-Columbian pots
and of cool abstractions.

Wholly inflexible,
one three-fingered white-gloved **hand**
pointing to Heaven, one down,
tawdry with his cardboard feet—
why do I hesitate
to get rid of him?

The old gay bartender
with the sulky parrot, asked me
twenty-five years ago
“Busy days, Bill, lonely nights?”
I remember I bought a wino
a beer he wouldn’t drink.

It’s time to be grateful for
whatever’s free on the invoice,
take anything given, listen
in the dark human night
for even a fake plush frog
whispering “Ree-deep.”