

nothing came but local license plates.  
Then, as I was coming from my catcher's crouch,  
a car-carrier passed, loaded with Hudson-Teraplanes.  
In the maroon Tudor, slanted on that rattling hill,  
a face rose like a slow balloon behind the windshield,  
looked darkly about and floated down, away.

The spectral streetlight spilled sodden terror  
by the hedge where I stood watching my father  
and his fellows still at the supper table  
tossing their relieved whiskies and growing loud:  
' ... miles from here in the opposite direction ...'  
and all the depression bums quaking in their boots ...'  
My secret quaked in the toe and heel depths of my mind.  
In that dark face, bum's or bandit's, was what  
had dimmed all our darkened days, and I knew then that  
I would carry it my years like the  
black-rimmed portrait of a Rouault king.

-- Richard Snyder

Ashland, Ohio

the buried cannonball in lake superior

i am round and rusty and pitted  
i love my shape and i never have to  
lose weight but i do without  
trying i get pitted with age my  
pieces fall off so i guess ill  
just stay here in lake superior losing weight.

the root.

nice to be a root in fact  
very nice to be a root its  
dark down here under the ground  
being a root is great people cant  
see you when you do things that  
offend people on the surface who  
get offended at people who do  
things in the light up there but  
down here i just sit and do offending  
things in the dark and think how nice  
it is to be a root

-- Patrick J. Coffey

Levittown, New York