

## A HOUSE-HUSBAND CALLED PHILPOT

Perhaps he should paint his toenails today  
and be one with the woman. There are no  
children to vegetate to, no race of males  
to liberate himself from: he has bought  
the time his talent demanded, and talent  
sneaked away leaving him exposed. Neighbouring  
house-husbands with time on their hands, drop  
by to debate issues of the day, the big  
questions of life, like getting into a Lady's  
purse, or into her bed -- and ways of being good  
to their women, out at work. Certainly,  
this sort of training (in place of child-  
bearing) has kept his friends from turning  
into cabbage. Later, the women will blame them  
for that. But as always, there's the catch.  
Childhood acne has followed him into middle-age:  
it's his personal wiping-the-baby's-bottom curse  
as blood and matter spurt on the mirror, leaving  
his face, well-repaired, a mass of scars and ruts  
and scabs of differing colours. How could she  
come home to such a mess? He will paint his toe-  
nails after all. That might divert her.