

40

As a canoe slides by on one strong stroke
 hope his help not I, who do hardly bear
 his gift still. But whisper
 I am not utterly, I pare
 an apple for my pipsqueak Mercy and
 she runs & all need naked apples, fanned
 their tinier envies,
 Vomitings, trots, rashes. Can be hope a cloak?

from HOMAGE TO MISTRESS BRADSTREET

"The dramatic immediacy, suppleness, and multiplicity of Anne Bradstreet's inner monologue gave Berryman the elements he was to expand and embellish in achieving the voice of his Henry poems, a long series of sonnets and sonnetlike poems in which elusive Henry (sometimes Mr. Bones) plays, snarls, despairs, goes mad, but always manages somehow to be man in the agony of perception. They are difficult poems and always worth the difficulty." -John Ciardi

#149

This world is gradually becoming a place
 Where I do not care to be any more. Can Delmore die?

...

#352

During those years he met his seminars,
 went & lectured & read, talked with human beings,
 paid insurance & taxes;
 but his mind was not on it. His mind was elsewhere
 in an area where the soul not talks but sings
 & where foes are attacked with axes.

Enemies his pilgrimage duly brought
 to bring him down, and thy almost succeeded.
 He sang on like a harmful bird.
 His foes are like footnotes, he figured, sought
 chiefly by doctoral candidates: props, & needed, -
 comic relief, - absurd.

...

#366

Oh, I suffer from a strike
 & a strike and three balls. I stand up for much,
 Wordsworth & that sort of thing.

These Songs are not meant to be understood, you understand.
 They are only meant to terrify & comfort.

from DREAMSONGS

