Suburban
BY [John](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/young-smith) Ciardi

Yesterday Mrs. Friar phoned.'Mr. Ciardi,
how do you do?' she said. 'I am sorry to say
this isn't exactly a social call. The fact is
your dog has just deposited-forgive me-
a large repulsive object in my petunias.'

I thought to ask, 'Have you checked the rectal grooving
for a positive I.D.?' My dog, as it happened,
was in Vermont with my son, who had gone fishing-
if that's what one does with a girl, two cases of beer,
and a borrowed camper. I guessed I'd get no trout.

But why lose out on organic gold for a wise crack
'Yes, Mrs. Friar,' l said, 'I understand.'
'Most kind of you,' she said. 'Not at all,' I said.
I went with a spade. She pointed, looking away.
'I always have loved dogs,' she said, 'but really!'

I scooped it up and bowed. 'The animal of it.
I hope this hasn't upset you, Mrs. Friar.'
'Not really,' she said, 'but really!' I bore the turd
across the line to my own petunias
and buried it till the glorious resurrection

when even these suburbs shall give up their dead.

She Considers the Dimensions of Her Soul

BY [YOUNG SMITH](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/young-smith)

The shape of her soul is a square.

She knows this to be the case

because she often feels its corners

pressing sharp against the bone

just under her shoulder blades

and across the wings of her hips.

At one time, when she was younger,

she had hoped that it might be a cube,

but the years have worked to dispel

this illusion of space, so that now

she understands: it is a simple plane,

a shape with surface, but no volume—

a window without a building, an eye

without a mind.

                        Of course, this square

does not appear on x-rays, and often,

weeks may pass when she forgets

that it exists. When she does think

to consider its purpose in her life,

she can say only that it aches with

a single mystery, for whose answer

she has long ago given up the search—

since its question is a word whose name

can never quite be asked. This yearning,

she has concluded, is the only function

of the square, repeated again and again

in each of its four matching angles,

until, with time, she is persuaded

anew that what it frames has no

interest in ever making her happy.

The Emperor of Ice-Cream

BY [Wallace](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/young-smith) Stevens

Call the roller of big cigars,
The muscular one, and bid him whip
In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.
Let the wenches dawdle in such dress
As they are used to wear, and let the boys
Bring flowers in last month's newspapers.
Let be be finale of seem.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

Take from the dresser of deal,
Lacking the three glass knobs, that sheet
On which she embroidered fantails once
And spread it so as to cover her face.
If her horny feet protrude, they come
To show how cold she is, and dumb.
Let the lamp affix its beam.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

Dog's Death

BY [John](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/young-smith) Updike

She must have been kicked unseen or brushed by a car.
Too young to know much, she was beginning to learn
To use the newspapers spread on the kitchen floor
And to win, wetting there, the words, "Good dog! Good dog!"

We thought her shy malaise was a shot reaction.
The autopsy disclosed a rupture in her liver.
As we teased her with play, blood was filling her skin
And her heart was learning to lie down forever.

Monday morning, as the children were noisily fed
And sent to school, she crawled beneath the youngest's bed.
We found her twisted and limp but still alive.
In the car to the vet's, on my lap, she tried

To bite my hand and died. I stroked her warm fur
And my wife called in a voice imperious with tears.
Though surrounded by love that would have upheld her,
Nevertheless she sank and, stiffening, disappeared.

Back home, we found that in the night her frame,
Drawing near to dissolution, had endured the shame
Of diarrhoea and had dragged across the floor
To a newspaper carelessly left there.  Good dog.

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus

BY William carlos williams

According to Brueghel
when Icarus fell
it was spring
a farmer was ploughing
his field
the whole pageantry
of the year was
awake tingling
near
the edge of the sea
concerned
with itself
sweating in the sun
that melted
the wings' wax
unsignificantly
off the coast
there was
a splash quite unnoticed
this was
Icarus drowning

# Traveling through the Dark

# BY William E. Stafford

Traveling through the dark I found a deer

dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.

It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:

that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of the car

and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;

she had stiffened already, almost cold.

I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason—

her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,

alive, still, never to be born.

Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;

under the hood purred the steady engine.

I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;

around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all—my only swerving—,

then pushed her over the edge into the river.