

# Poets

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## Patriot Acts

The poets taught me that some people are dirty, some  
Fancy, and some write poetry! Then they taught me that

All of us are symbols inhabiting other symbols;  
That the worker consumes the consumer and the young

Boy consumes the old man and the nubile girl  
Consumes her shampoo! I didn't understand

When the poet used all the exclamation points.  
I didn't understand where the lawn went after

The lawnmower finished eating it or where  
The subway car slept in the dead of night.

They said, "Witness the cider-barrel, the log-cabin,  
The hickory-stick, the palmetto, and all the leaves

Of the great books yellowing." I said, "I can't stand  
The smell of the library!" They said, "Can't you

See the power of the flag and the cardinal,  
Our state bird?" I didn't know we still had a state

Bird. They said, "When Plato defines a line as  
A flowing point, are you going to argue with him?"

I said, "If a line's drawn in the sand, then it'd better  
Be attached to a rubber band." "You mean," they said,

A slingshot?" I said, "No, I was thinking about  
Mother's old swimming suit." They said, "We're not

Here to destroy you." And then one of them made  
A move for his pen. I said, "Don't do it—it might

Explode!" They said, "Don't worry, we'll let you  
Fuck the heroes after we're done with them."