

After The Crack Up

Augie March

After the fun, after the freedom,
The discipline of married men?

What a fanned out feather paints it rosy,
What a rank file of flowers make the posey,
What a limp congregation.
I was sick before the germ got a handle on,
I might've been the very cattle it was riding on,
With the right information,
Moderate education, middle home.

What a fella needs to know,
Is all a fella doesn't need to know,
If you suffer you don't talk about it,
Which was the lie that laid me low.

Under the coat, under the blanket,
In the wicker chest, in the sparrow breast.

What does it tell you when it tells you now you grow up?
What does it tell you when it tells you now you be a man?

Tidy your thinking up, finish your drinking up?
Be the Tom, be the Jack, beat the beaten track,
Die the slow death your forefathers died, in fact
Be ever lonely and angry inside of that
Maze of rage and inchoate affection.

What a fella needs to know,
Is all a fella doesn't need to know,
If you suffer you don't talk about it.
To "men who know and men who knew...",
Who for the "Silent grip of hands will do"*
And if you suffer you don't talk about it,
Which was the lie that laid me low...

After the fall, after the crack up,
Nothing then? Nothing then.