

VEINS

Veins: Veins keep pretty much to themselves, they travel around in their own circles. That's not a bad beginning, but I hope it doesn't mean that this poem has to be as endless as the human vein, which as scientists have recently discovered, is apt to curve around when it reaches the feet and double back on itself. Reality must be in poetry, reality must be in poetry! So—they want reality in their poetry, they want this poem, when touched, to bleed. That is, they want it not only to be read, but colored red. Who was it that was calling for reality in poetry? Oh, the people up the street a few blocks, they want a poetry of pure outpouring; in Washington, they have recently set up a Hemophilia lobby. Oh, that's getting serious then. . . They talk about life, these people, but everybody knows the only way they ever really make it is through an Act of Congress. Who would want to publish a capillary, anyway? Is there really any reader who wants an old aorta lying around the house, except of course for the one in his own throat? Vein, vein, which can bring such pain, you may enter my poetry here in this place, but if you want to burst out on the surface, you'll have to limit yourself to the person looking over my shoulder, heart wildly pounding, thumping most distractingly, saying "No, no, you can't do that," giving me advice while I'm trying to write.