

ONE REE-DEEP (NO CHARGE)

Sears Roebuck gave him to me  
free with a TV set.  
The salesman called me back:  
“Mr. Dickey, here, take this.”  
A two-and-a-half-foot frog  
holding a daisy.

Embarrassed, I got a sack  
for him, but when I stopped  
next door, in a ratty bar,  
there, poking out at me  
was the incredible top  
of his wide plush face.

If I had children, he  
would belong to them  
and they would explain him. He’s  
not right in my careful house  
full of pre-Columbian pots  
and of cool abstractions.

Wholly inflexible,  
one three-fingered white-gloved **hand**  
pointing to Heaven, one down,  
tawdry with his cardboard feet—  
why do I hesitate  
to get rid of him?

The old gay bartender  
with the sulky parrot, asked me  
twenty-five years ago  
“Busy days, Bill, lonely nights?”  
I remember I bought a wino  
a beer he wouldn’t drink.

It’s time to be grateful for  
whatever’s free on the invoice,  
take anything given, listen  
in the dark human night  
for even a fake plush frog  
whispering “Ree-deep.”