

## Revelation

I can remember once being shown the black bull  
when a child at the farm for eggs and milk.  
They called him Bob--as though perhaps  
you could reduce a monster  
with the charm of a friendly name.  
At the threshold of his outhouse, someone  
held my hand and let me peer inside.  
At first, only black  
and the hot reek of him. Then he was immense,  
his edges merging with the darkness, just  
a big bulk and a roar to be really scared of,  
a trampling, and a clanking tense with the chain's jerk.  
His eyes swivelled in the great wedge of his tossed head.  
He roared his rage. His nostrils gaped.

And in the yard outside,  
oblivious hens picked their way about.  
The faint and rather festive tinkling  
behind the mellow stone and hasp was all they knew  
of that Black Mass, straining at his chains.  
I had always half-known he existed--  
this antidote and Anti-Christ his anarchy  
threatening the eggs, well rounded, self-contained--  
and the placidity of milk.

I ran, my pigtails thumping alien on my back in fear,  
past the big boys in the farm lane  
who pulled the wings from butterflies and  
blew up frogs with straws.  
Past thronged hedge and harried nest,  
scared of the eggs shattering--  
only my small and shaking hand on the jug's rim  
in case the milk should spill.