

## GEORGE BOWERING / THREE POEMS

### LAYERS 5

The ranging mountain boy  
has become the kept man.

His only clouds now  
moved inside,  
as his hair,  
now in the belly  
matted.

His head is bare,  
as any mountain, the latter  
at least unchanged.

The vest across his  
chest, it is  
chained. At the end  
a key

to open all his doors  
one after another, all joined  
by ceilings.

## IT'S THERE YOU CAN'T DENY IT

The muddy snow melting  
along the east side of Grosvenor Ave here

brings old dog turds to light  
They have begun to separate

into their component parts—  
sixty percent grain, forty percent meat products.

It's there you can't deny it,  
you can't flush it away, the ground covered

with shit. It makes you think:  
at an average of a pound per head

New York has to hide twelve million  
pounds of human shit a day,

or 4.38 billion pounds a year.  
The queen of England poops

three times her weight in turds a year.  
In a normal lifetime she'll pile up

fourteen tons of majestic brown crap.  
Ah, what do we think of ourselves,

poet or queen

or the dogs in between?

# THE BARS

Decide to hide  
certain things

& the voice goes bad,  
the bars come together in front of my eyes

forever.

Look into your heart  
my love

& what do you see:  
are there bars there

Can you see your own heart  
or the bloody fog?

Sure this may be  
the last chance my love

is me for the moment  
lying behind bars inside me.

Talk to him, offer bread, promise  
not to hide, bring you heart,

my heart, at least  
against the bars.

Bleed there, & with the blood  
eyes open, the bars still there.

The voice goes there

out of hiding.