

The Hollins Critic

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S. S. Van Dine: Fragments and Divagations



S. S. Van Dine

At one point, not so very long ago and roused to action by a certain literary flattening I was noticing, especially in the intentionally unintelligible poems of certain younger poets who were gaining some small reputation as Neo-Dadaists or Ashberian echolaliasts, I was planning to sub-title this essay "How Willard Huntington Wright Became S. S. Van Dine and Accidentally Created Post-Modernism." But time, as it does *contra* Borges as Borges knew, slipped quietly past, and John Ashbery, RIP, is no longer with us, and a good deal of that nonsensical poetry written by his now



Names for Children

Glue sniffers. Ephyra. Bed bugs. Larva. Marginals. Dependents. Fruit birds. Little piranhas. Moths. Spinning tops. Those without supervision. Zeitgeist. Passenger pigeons. Hamlet. Waifs. Rugby boys. Calves floating the great Pacific garbage patch. Dust of life. Cancerous fledgling. A room of clocks. Leveret on irriguous lawn. Mosquitoes. Goddamnuts. Whelps. Accidents. Immortality. Umbilical bastards. Matthew. Anklebiters. Golden toads. Descendants of Ham. We. Dickens. Neonates. Tadpoles. Mark. Offspring and prodigy. Calorie. Mice. Posterity and tax write-off. Luke. Museum fawn. Crayonists. Mouths to feed. Lazarus. D-503. Colony of shrewdness. Puggles. Flappers on Mistake Lake. Prufrock's spermatozoa. A baptized pupa. Peter. Lice eaters. Dodo. Cherubim. Hatchling and fingerling. Wolfgang. Bedroom commune. Foal struck by minivan. Sandbox businessmen. Rainman. Malthus. 1400. Big Brother. Polliwog. Nymphs by midnight. Shoat at dawn. Wiggler, lobotomy, wiggler. Felicific calculus. Bob. Deepwater Horizon. Cub. Roman numerals. Solar erosion. John. People who are overweight. Isaac. I haven't seen a deer in the park in so long.

— Amos Jasper Wright