

Robert Lowell

(1917-1977)

Words for Hart Crane (1959)

“When the Pulitzers showered on some dope  
or screw who flushed our dry mouths out with soap,  
few people would consider why I took  
to stalking sailors, and scattered Uncle Sam’s  
phony gold-plated laurels to the birds.  
Because I knew my Whitman like a book,  
stranger in America, tell my country: I,  
Catullus redivivus, once the rage  
of the Village and Paris, used to play my role  
of homosexual, wolfing the stray lambs  
who hungered by the Place de la Concorde.  
My profit was a pocket with a hole.  
Who asks for me, the Shelley of my age,  
must lay his heart out for my bed and board.”