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The Photograph Of The Man Who Looked Like My Father

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THE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MAN WHO LOOKED LIKE MY
FATHER

Homage to Baudelaire

My wife had been away for two days, and I had to take stock of my dishonesty, my gifts and my betrayals. As I walked past the antique stores on 3rd Avenue, I saw a photograph of a face that looked like my father's. Some man looked straight at me with his down-turned mouth; and the brain behind his high forehead knows how detestable, how far gone, how little to be loved life is.

What if that is the truth? What if we've read too much Whitman, engorged too much sentimental approval of life from these morning-in-America people? Suddenly an outraged voice said, "You're disgusting with your slander of life! In your low childish way you draw attention to yourself by these tricks of language; it's all a shameless appeal for sympathy. You deserve the same as a stray dog who pretends to love the cook! None of us in the kitchen will have mercy on you."

That is not what I expected. What could I do but shout: "I am tired of being abused by journalists and people who cannot understand metaphor."