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TOAD, HOG, ASSASSIN, MIRROR

Toad, hog, assassin, mirror. Some of its favorite words, which are breath. Or handwriting: the long tail of the 'y' disappearing into a bam like a rodent's, and suddenly it is winter after all. After all what? After the ponds dry up in mid-August and the children drop pins down each canyon and listen for an echo. Next question, please. What sex is it, if it has any? It's a male. It's a white male Caucasian. No distinguishing birthmarks, the usual mole above the chin. Last seen crossing against a light in Omaha. Looks intelligent. But haven't most Americans seen this poem at least once by now? At least once. Then, how is the disease being . . . communicated? As far as we can determine, it is communicated entirely by doubt. As soon as the poets reach their mid-twenties they begin living behind hedgerows. At the other end of the hedgerows someone attractive is laughing, either at them, or with a lover during sexual intercourse. So it is like prom night. Yes. But what is the end of prom night? The end of prom night is inside the rodent; it is the bam collapsing on a summer day. It is inside the guts of a rodent. Then, at least, you are permitted an unobstructed view of the plain? Yes. And what will be out there, then, on the plain? A rider approaching with a tense face, who can't see that this horse has white roses instead of eyes. You mean . . . the whole thing all over again. Unfortunately, yes, at least as far as we are permitted to see.