

The Blacksmith

The chairs are gone where old men sat
And watch'd the blacksmith as he swung
Short-handled hammers at the steel
They heard the anvil ring and ring
And saw the heated metal bend
And heard the hiss of shoes he thrust
Into the bucket at his hip

The anvil rang across the day
The blacksmith spoke of men of steel
The bellows of his chest breathed heat
Into his stories of great fights
And bravest horses ever bred
And coward acts of cops and thieves
His yarns as crafted as his shoes

The anvil rang across the years
Steel wrist and elbow wore and wore
Angina wracked the ancient chest
As lower fell the hammers' arc
As chairs were empty one by one
His wife fell terminally ill
His station wagon rusted out

Burnt coal he left lays scattr'd round
Forg'd pieces of his work remain
A buff and pinchers still in use
A chisel, hook, a wire twist
A sulky, chain, a tie-up ring
And stories of brave horses still
And men of iron and chivalry