

INITIATION INTO THE POETIC EXPERIENCE

Gene Fehler

Chalked upon a blackboard, cold
As blue cadavers, stiff and old,
Were words defining poetry:
Metaphor, metonymy.

I closed my eyes to stop the pain
Of boredom bludgeoning my brain,
So there were words I didn't see.
Alliteration? Simile?

"Poe's use of assonance is nice . . .
You still don't see?...we've read it twice?
His onomatopoeia's clear;
Bells toll and tinkle in our ear."

Bell Hell, I thought, contemptuously,
Not caring what a poem might be.
I thought of Old McAdam's lake,
Of fish to catch, of sun to bake

The cold of poetry away.
"Wake up!" I heard Miss Drilling say.
"Have you no sensitivity?
No reverence for poetry?"

"You haven't heard a word I've said
About these lovely poems we've read.
For punishment, read orally
William Blake's 'A Poison Tree.'"

I gazed around with eyes of glass
Upon the grinning English class,
Then formed a bitter, damning curse
While monotoning Blake's apt verse.