

## Uncle Jerry

After poor Aunt Vonnie  
lapsed into her coma

and became a “vegetable”  
weighing no more we guessed  
than fifty fetal pounds

Uncle Jerry, bless his heart  
spared absolutely nothing

bribing everyone who asked  
until he had her placed at last  
in that nameless, private home

for whacked-out millionaires  
so as to bathe her everyday

then feed her through a tube  
in her half-pint stomach  
another fifteen years. Who

ever heard of such devotion!  
Nor was that the least of it.

A religious man, Uncle Jerry  
was sure they'd meet again  
in heaven — or later maybe

at the noisy Resurrection.  
In any case, he'd be ready.

He owned the leafy gravesite  
next to hers. Casket, headstone  
everything was all arranged —

except . . . he had these doubts.  
What if she wasn't down there?

They do that you know. Sell you  
an expensive bill of goods  
then pull the old switcharoo

and sell it all over again. Or  
suppose they just made a mistake?

Anyway, he couldn't stand it.  
The thought of being buried  
next to some complete stranger —

another man perhaps, who knows?  
was making him sick. And so

five years after the funeral  
he had her dug up again  
just to make sure. Everyone

even Uncle Jerry, was amazed  
at how much of her was left.

But what a relief! Eternity  
safe and cozy once again . . .  
And as long as he was at it

why not build a mausoleum?  
That way he could have a key

and visit any time he liked —  
all those warm spring nights  
his flashlight woke the birds

and the white wisteria foamed  
in moonlight near the door.