Movie Party,

I.
O stunning hamstrings, her back-pointed legs
Stand brightly by him, him whose childish arm
Rests on his backside round as apples. Here
The smartest of a smarting generation
Gather for learning, strength, and luxury.
All come in presently to join the party.

II.
The mad projector once subdued, they sit
Perching in conscious clusters on cocked legs
Triangulate the screen, the moving shadows
Shielding the false decades wherefrom this spring
Is winding. And presently, being so ruled,
They are sisters and brothers touched with intimacy:
Passing at breakfast; morning anger; or now,
Watching together, or coffee: unknown to courtship
Intimacy beyond philosophy, watching
As they grow in one another’s days. Or watch
For they see in the great red House’s crumbling moods
A haven for the examined life; or watch

For all the shadowed corners of generations
To spy upon each other, decades outrolling.
Some are the sons of dead men or of madmen
And quarrelling women; one like Prospero
Creates his magician’s state in lettered studies,
One in the chambered love of remembered names;

And one, most loved, is like the honey of bees
Spooned upon bread and let sit — or waking after
Crying in dreams, for he sits upon the eyes
In confident sweet crustiness, as grainy
As an old movie. One father is a spy.
The whirring decades coil upon the screen.

There are movies, too, in Ward 3-East sometimes
At the clinic in Bethesda, where the adult
Manic-depressives shucking off their families
And own volition are gathered, watching themselves
Crabwise upon the sands of ‘Thirties shadows
Like a thing of their own generation. Although mind moves them

Slantways across the course of human love.
Who that is born and has not given birth
Can crumple up his heart in judgment? — Caught
Like a lone balloonist in a contracting skin
They soon enough will bear and judge, who watch
The Oak Ridge suicide, and the drugged mother,

Paul Aebersold who is incontinent.
The young topple remorseful generations,
Learn and grow strong, they exercise their minds
Rending and comforting. In this gymnasium
They strip for battle with the naked elders
Whose bodies droop with patience coarse as grain.

III.
O stunning hamstrings, her back-pointed legs
Stand brightly by him, him whose childish arm
Rests on his backside round as apples. Here
With brightness slanting upward from the valley
She takes his elbow between her finger and thumb,
In oblique shadows turning to join the party.