

## THE MUMMY IN THE FREEPORT ART MUSEUM

Amongst the masterpieces of the small-town  
Picassos and Van Goghs and photographs  
of the rural poor and busts of dead Greeks  
or the molds of busts donated by the Art  
Institute of Chicago to this dying  
town's little museum, there was a mummy,  
a real mummy, laid out in a dim-  
lit room by himself. I used to go  
to the museum just to visit him, a pharaoh  
who, expecting an afterlife  
of beautiful virgins and infinite food  
and all the riches and jewels  
he'd enjoyed in earthly life,  
must have wondered how the hell  
he'd ended up in Freeport, Illinois.  
And I used to go alone into that room  
and stand beside his sarcophagus and say,  
"My friend, I've asked myself the same thing."