

Money

At first it will seem tame,
willing to be domesticated.
It will nest
in your pocket
or curl up in a corner 5
reciting softly to itself
the names of the presidents.

It will delight your friends,
shake hands with men
like a dog and lick 10
the legs of women.

But like an amoeba
it makes love
in secret
only to itself. 15

Fold it frequently;
it needs exercise.

Water it every three days
and it will repay you
with displays of affection. 20

Then one day when you think
you are its master
it will turn its head
as if for a kiss
and bite you gently 25
on the hand.

There will be no pain
but in thirty seconds
the poison will reach your heart.

Victor Contoski (b. 1936)

Of Money

Give money me, take friendship whoso list,^o wishes
For friends are gone come once adversity,
When money yet remaineth safe in chest,
That quickly can thee bring from misery.
Fair face show friends when riches do abound; 5
Come time of proof, farewell, they must away.
Believe me well, they are not to be found,
If God but send thee once a lowering day.
Gold never starts aside, but in distress
Finds ways enough to ease thine heaviness. 10