

James B. Nicola

Why I Write Daily

Perhaps I shouldn't talk about myself.
Who would be interested, or should be?
I've not lived long enough, or hard enough,
to warrant the concern of poetry.
I've loved but friends; my only lovers, been
manqués. I've only lived in this tired town
and had one job, secure as idle sin.
I've never met a soul of wide renown.

However, I recall, in the fifth grade,
one day, a workshop by a visiting
poet, with young eyes, who loved everything
we wrote. He'd find a poem in the most
mundane events, the dumbest thoughts. Like mine.

And suddenly my paltry life was

fine.

Because our scratchy fifth-grade poems made
him clap, and clap. And at the end he toast-
ed us, but smiled at me.

Since then,
I've wished that I could feel that way again.

James B. Nicola

John Gould Fletcher

I knew nobody read him anymore
although he had won a Pulitzer prize.
So in the stacks this morning, drooly for

some tome of guts and blood to taste, my eyes
lit on his name, I took down his *Selected
Poems*, where I suffered the surprise

of the lost soul on being resurrected:
blue-stamped in front, by some librarian,
news that he took his life. I reflected

and realized: Henceforth I never can
enjoy a verse of his not knowing this,
limited as I am, still but a man.

Plath, Sexton, Hart Crane — others — were famous
before those drastic days their lights went dim,
but had their work remained anonymous,

or had they worn at times a pseudonym,
I could have read them from a place more pure,
as, yesterday, unstained, I'd have read him.