

STRONG SILENT

Tall quiet men
are expected
to speak meaningfully
as if not talking much from on high
qualifies us
as gurus of talking,

but just because I *don't contribute regularly*
as my teachers scolded me
doesn't mean that when I do
I want a damned papal audience.
Yet let one inanity
or flopped joke escape

and listeners look at me
as if wondering why
I haven't parted a sea.
Like film fans
who confuse actors with their roles
strangers suppose

that just because
I loom looking
stern and withheld
I'm reserving anything like wisdom.
What a relief, then,
after I speak stupidly

to be listened to
without expectation
because only then am I capable
of impressing, just as expected
to impress,
I disappoint.