

## CHARACTER

In all of us, it lies there still,  
It dreams there silently, asleep . . .  
Not long ago, with words of skill,  
Old poets knew the avenues  
To enter, stir it, make it weep,  
Cause it to rise, to brave the strife,  
To pay society its dues  
And laugh at death with sober life.

Beneath its sleepy coats of paint,  
Below thick sheets of newsprint ink,  
Beyond T.V. without restraint  
And talk-show gossip's afterglow,  
It lies there dazed, too dull to think,  
Too drugged to hope, too dark to see,  
Too demon-bound to want to know  
The sweaty cost of dignity.

The latest movie lulls it on  
To lethargy and lazy will,  
Until the urge to stand is gone . . .  
The current song has mesmerized  
Its zeal with lust and selfish thrill  
For seizing all that's base and fake,  
Until the soul is catechized  
In gloom from which it can't awake.

In all of us, almost entombed,  
This giant was not meant to drowse!  
This energy, that sages groomed  
(With proverb, poem, epigram),  
Prophetic voices soon must rouse!  
For, if this lion is not stirred  
To shake off fantasy and sham,  
Then hell will speak the final word.

— *David L. Hatton, 11/16/1993*