

At A Certain Public Lecture (1953)

I hummed a hundred lines of **Beowulf**
(To keep myself awake);
I trapped a hundred Communists,
And burned them at the stake;
I hurled my latest lady's name
At the dull florescent flame;
And let my flagging brain begin
Some trifling dodges with a sin:
But all in vain:—
Unprodded by fair learning's itch,
The traitor brain was sleeping at the switch.
I bit my thumb
Till it was numb;
But down dropped my chin on chest:
The speaker spoke; I slept, and was addressed.

—A. P. C.

