THE DAY YOUR SON WAS BORN, IT IS

Last night you saw it hooded,
silent, sipping from the saucer
of a child's skull a child's
blood.
   Tonight it puts aside
that holy wine and leaves you
falling like a dreamer in a void.
It is the darker twin of love.
It comes when you are least
or most prepared.
   It is the viper
in your sock, the sand that bogs
you to a stop, the scream
your strain to scream but never
scream.
   Awake, you ask
the night if what you dream
is what all fathers dream.
Your midnight house keeps talking
to itself.
   A nightlight paints
a gargoyle on the ceiling while
you smoke another inch from yesterday's
cigar.
   For minutes you mistake it
in the smoke until you recognize
the hood, the face averted
and the rest in shadow.
   Silent,
it stays as near as air.
   It bids
at baccarat with something in another
hood.
   Call that its mirror trick.
Call that its solitaire for two
or give it any name that shows
how fear and fear's illusions
are the same.
   As long as you
go on, so does the game.