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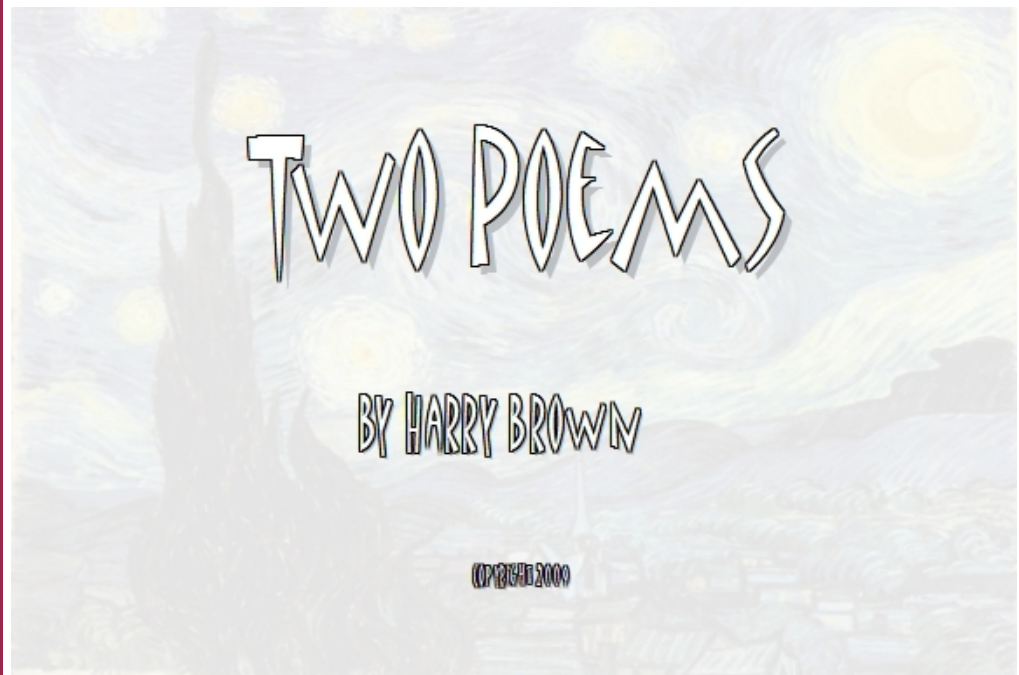
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For Mrs. E.T.C.

I often think of you, flat-chested,
Dressed in a worn brown short-sleeved sweater
And Campbell plaid pleated skirt
In winter or spring,
Or in white-dotted purple chiffon
All long-flowing from the twenties, thirties;
Freckled, loud-rouged without one brush of art;
Mouth a tad wide
And often squared for elocution,
Lips unpainted, chapped with the work of talk,
Speech meticulous and articulate even when you worked
As you said we should at our English, Latin, French
Like killing snakes.

My lady, you own every grace.

In Admiration of a Lady Tom

I know a feisty feline five-feet-one, breasts
soft as rock when she grinds her ax, hard as silk
when her hair is down—a Lady who socks it to the Gentlemen
who roam in registered herds pure as Mom,
who try to keep their birds and bottles hid—unknown.
They golf and joke, they sip and smoke, they shower together
for hours. Togaed in towels, lobotomized in mass,
these Romans sit in soggy heat, slap backs and butts,
brag of quotas surpassed, grouse about reports
and votes, predict the Dow, chat about Reds
and 'Cats. They wear the hats, they get the fat, but now
and then these fat cats understand they've one tough kitty
squeezing their scrota. No androgen, no drag—just grit,
guts, and claws. They then over great grimace grin
and wink outside the herd as if it's understood

around she's simply a dizzy pain, this feline gripping
their groins.

But I know better than that. They can't shake her off
with a bellowed bass "Scat!" The Lady's got balls!
And makes these chummy Roman ruminants sweat.

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Harry Brown retired from the ECU English Department and continues to teach part-time. His latest book is *Felt Along the Blood: New and Selected Poems* (Wind Publications, 2005); his seventh book, *In Some Households the King Is Soul: Poems*, will be published by Wind Publications in 2010.