Spring 1981

Coot and the Sperm Bank

William Pitt Root
COOT AND THE SPERM BANK

I'll tell you, tell you damn straight
—this whole notion of banks is sorry
as a sinner Sunday morning. I'd never
trust a man who scrubs his nails
with anything I grub for. And this business
of "donors" makes the whole affair ring
righteous as Christmas with a preacher.
Money's bad enough but now they're
setting up a whole new generation
to be strangers. It's sad all right.
Sadder than them phoney fires
they burn up iron logs with
in bars where youngsters sit
all night working up a sweat
to record music. Hot enough,
that fire, to brand a steer with,
but it leaves your cockles cold
and it don't fill up the air
with the right scent. You
read a good fire like a book,
eyes and ears, nose and skin
all working at the same time.
There's a deal of history in one,
and hints about the future. Lord,
I'd dread to look into the eyes
of any son of mine
my Missus had withdrawn
from some Nobel genius stranger
who wouldn't even leave his name.
You got to tend a fire once you set it
or it can run amok seeking you out.