

# The Poppy

The poppy is a cartouche:  
Burnt wadding, sulfur-edged.

Not a scab but the blood  
That wells to form the scab.

Like rhetoric, the purpose  
Of the poppy is persuasion;

Still, the poppy radiates *doubt*  
Given the benefit of the doubt.

Downcast, with a humor  
Too torpid to even muster

What's wrong, the poppy  
Is all shrug and crick.

When angels entertained  
The holy child, when Eve

Spoke in fluent *serpent*,  
The poppy turned away.

Saw-dust and paraffin,  
Wheat chaff and clay,

The poppy is Osiris's body,  
Spent at last, irredeemable.

-Eric Pankey