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Rancor

Mike Vanden Bosch
Dordt College

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Mike Vanden Bosch

Early on, I spurn love, begin to hate,
not all—only the one or two ahead
of me. They're the ones I must foil, who prate

of gods and giving. I don't wish them dead,
just ill-fed or struck white with leprosy
or some disease to put them sick in bed.

One night in sleep an angel helps me see
myself dying, iron anvil on my chest
no man could lift; my heart is flat, not free

but crushed yet crammed with hate. A foxhole test
bends me to pray, "Lord, cut them down"—too late
I catch my tongue. Too late now to arrest

nurtured hate. I've dined years at Satan's plate,
and now I bitch in winding lines and wait.