

PAUL TYNDALL

The Priesthood

—For AYW

You spend your nights studying Rimbaud
in your tiny room, while outside
miners from Cerillos brawl
over a yellow-haired prostitute
who's come all the way
from Madrid.

A cool desert wind blows in
from over the mountains.
Your candle sputters
and coughs. But you go on
muttering to yourself
in a strange tongue,
marking the poet's numbers
as faithfully as if you
were counting beads.

At this high altitude,
you have denied yourself
everything but the Word,
pure, virgin, inviolable.
Like the shaman with
his peyote, you seek
a vision, a systematic
derangement of
the senses.

Finally, at dawn, it comes.

The coyote, hovering
down dark canyons, between
pale mountains, cries.

Listen, listen, for
I enter now your thoughts.