

### Dylan Thomas at St. Vincent's Hospital, New York, 1953

*History: (1) Heavy alcoholism; (2) 1/2 grain morphine administered by a private doctor. Treated in hospital for toxic encephalopathy but diagnosis unconfirmed.*

— *Notice of Death*

The eighteen shots of Old Grandad were pure inspiration, a speck of morphine the final insult to the brain. Under orders to prevent a scene at any cost, the hotel doctor shoves the hypo towards me, real as 3-D. He speaks

broken English to match mine. His greasy spectacles show clearly what I've made of myself by needing above all to speak my mind. Pudgy cherub. Whore of horrors. Rats run up and down my legs, lovers' tongues sweet, sharp

as bourbon dance upon my skin. D.T.'s. Now what's more real than stout, warm sherry, the taste each right word leaves on the tongue? I made entire lecture halls paradigms of love. What an instrument lies here. How once I could

play it. My words made everyone who wanted to, dance, love. Now I fall apart into index cards, a few passable theses already yellowing, poems and other pleas for love and loan I left undone, so many sheets inscribed with but a few words

of art to put the touch on well heeled collectors. Now the final sentence. Women and men in white whose lot it is to plump and freshen me for the shroud sneak up to the bed with cameras to take my likeness home to hubby, mum,

the little woman, while out in the hall my wife and lover strike and clinch, howl my sins and shortcomings, shatter plaster statues of good Saint Vincent and the Blessed Virgin. Now there's the awful power of the word. Where I'm bound

at least there's no audience demanding I play the fool, the bard, no dean or publican, fallen aunts or fathers, children burning in blasted tenements, no unbearable thirst, for the first time since my wail of birth no need for words.

— *David Citino*