

THOMAS J. OWENS

Dillinger

I know the bolt
jerking back in my hand
and the press of the clip on my palm,
but, in Chicago, Capone's fat fingers
point to a graph.
In some Ohio police station
Purvis and Huntington
eat sandwiches at midnight.
Tracing my escapes,
they find the pattern of veins
on my wrists.

Sleeping in woods,
I wake covered with dew.
A spider-web hangs above me
like a bullet hole in glass.
I see it all--
the fingerprints eaten away by acid,
the Gable movie, the Woman in Red.
Thousands come to see my body
gray as five day meat
while carnival barkers make bids
with my father.

I light a cigarette.
I load my gun with bullets
the size of fingers.
All day, I feel like a man
saying his name into an empty well.