

JOEL LIPMAN

*"What Lies Do We Live Out Year After Year,
Isolating Ourselves"*

(from William Everson)

Bill comes home to a dead cat—the stiff eye
stares from behind the lamp table,
3 heads of cabbage stink under the sink.

There is a soft chair, green, to fall into
and while dancers burn in the jam-packed nitespot with unmarked exits
(70 dead in the last edition of "Nachtsprechen"),
the telephone rings and the radio responds
with commercials, music, news, weather.

Henderson tunes his piano across the hall.
His fingers pluck the harp in the housing
and angelic chords appear in his hands
fed to an expanding hog
that shits on the verandah.

Bill comes home to a flooded bathroom,
water is on, the ceiling gone and
legs hang along with the chandelier.

"It was wrong to jimmy the door
and try to rob you. I had to use the toilet, then
it backed up. I panicked. It wouldn't stop. I got the mop
but water kept running. I didn't mean
to wreck the plumbing, to use blankets to sop it up.
I never wanted to fall into the floor.
I have never been afraid before."

Bill says, "There is some thing you don't know, some
things I don't know, and the poem goes for it
instinctively."

The sacred ground behind the garage
where nonsense gets buried.