Celebrants

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CELEBRANTS

Who'll drink the dead man's whiskey? Don't all swear at once. Give us time to count his faithful and their years.

Aunt Karen says besides a quart one quarter gone he left two more he'd never touched. Oh hadn't he.

Unscrewed for us the bottle tops like clowns' hats, his laugh gurgled in our glasses, we heard it, didn't we.

Drank him for hours and drank again, maybe by much raising of arms to hurrah our way to where he lasts forever.

Because he was a miniature, wasn't he? of the big all-God who got his feet on the ground at last and when of course we killed him levitated into rumors of peace, peace (and war) repeated around the earth two thousand years.

So Uncle Emil's blood amber-live melted all the ice cubes we could freeze. Yet how somber he glowed lifted to our mouths for light, for once not drunk, but being drunk, and for the first time not good company.