

Waste

In their arcane journals the doctors tell us
what the bureaucrats are afraid to admit
that more people are sick than should be
that children are dying at abnormal rates
around the edges of our waste dumps
even faster than those who live inside
the urban cloud where most wastes come from,
where the air itself is poison the water
piped in through pipes that leak poison the food
trucked in pumped full of commercial poisons
—hormones preservatives pesticides
growth and flavor and appearance enhancers
cosmetic aids not so unlike those
the dead are treated to by the mortician.

Slow poisons, hard to detect at first,
hard long after the fact to prove,
harder still to prosecute when laws
are written by the poisoners
to make toxic chemicals innocent
until proved guilty as if they were people,
putting the burden of proof on the victims
in the name of free enterprise
progress family values scripture and freedom
to put toxins into products with no
responsibility for where they go
once the products are used up
disposed in waste dumps and incinerators
around which people die unnatural deaths.

from Mr America Drives His Car