

**I ONCE HAD A FATHER** – Vincent Francis (The Tower, 1961)

I once had a father who was eight feet tall,  
Solid as Time in a bank vault locked,  
Gentle and easy as an hour unlocked.  
I rode his back like a raft in the salt,  
Salt sea, and he had no fault at all.  
For when I was a boy he was eight feet tall.

I once had a father who had grown too fat,  
Grumbling at life like a rampart gun,  
Scolding and cold till the day was done,  
And searching for worry when the day should start.  
But I loved him with all my heart, at that,  
Though he was surly and much too fat.

I once had a father like a thin, sick gnome,  
Timid and shy in a dim greyed land.  
But Truth he captured in his big, hard hand,  
And he showed me a man who was never afraid  
Of sweat and of tears if they made my home  
A safe, snug harbor with a thin sick gnome.

I once had a father who, at drear nightfall,  
Vanished in the air with a cry so raging  
At the tide of life that had caught him aging  
That he failed to hear as I shrieked goodbye.  
But I still remember, when I was small,  
I once had a father who was eight feet tall.