By Accident

Tonight I can write if not the saddest lines,
the sort that drive a resonant ache in deep
like the shockingly slow cover of "Fast Car"
I heard as I lay in a black hotel room
feeling fine, then lines that gather drabber kinds
of sadness, like knowing which were the best days:
sad like a stand-up routine that's not working,
or the dated cover art on videos;
sad by accident like the fall of a song
from edgy to catchy to muzak classic,
or was that a fatality like fresh clerks
finding out the translucent brutalities
and slender consolations of office life?

Tonight I can write for example: the stars
are shot-holes in the roof of a ghost town hall,
and schoolie debris is strewn on cold beach sand:
the vomit of losers, a solitary thong,
sad like someone who has heard by accident
a snatch of what people say behind his back
without a trace of anger in their voices,
and thought: I probably say that sort of thing.