

The Gossips

by Theodore Roethke

The vulturine necks stretch out; the mean eyes bunch,
Float over hedges, witch-like, branch after branch,
Droop down from grimy windows; lust to lynch;

Or narrow to a dark reptilian stare,
Glide, poison-fanged, from bridge tea to the store.
The victim walks, his curdled spine aware.

Whatever could this bumbling man have done
That these cold venomous eyes should merge as one,
Freeze and transfix him like an evil sun?