

# Poem or *Catalogue of Paintings*

Dina Hardy

Untitled or *Self-Portrait* (formerly *Canvas Nailed to Wall*)

Once when I was a boy, swinging from monkey bars—  
an overcast afternoon, school only a week old. The playground,  
my place away from (circle one)

broken dishes / bottles / broken TVs

Three years ago on my birthday my

uncle's brother / grandmother

died. I can no longer eat Eskimo Pies. One summer day during  
long silences of blue skies, the ice cream truck ran over my

sister / brother

Always yield to children. My mother, oh, my mother.

Untitled or *Fiction* (formerly *Truth*)

You cannot bring yourself to use her name or the words *wife* or  
*mother*. The blackest deeds a man can do, you have done them all.  
Your presence in light pollutes the sun. You sit on the slope of the  
mountain—to return to where it all started, you limp, slow, towards  
home. You feel the weight of Apollo's curse on your shoulder, but  
it's the moon. You start the day with a bit of a hangover. Morning  
is always boring.

Untitled or *The Black Chemise* (formerly *Lesbian Sex on TV is Banal*)

Boredom is the act of being weary of anything as exciting as  
*bordello* or *Bordeaux*. You sip a dry martini. The writer writes *you*  
meaning *I*—the word *per se* is prosaic, ditto, *billfold*, *potential*.

Untitled or *Mime* (formerly *Man Locked in a Box*)

—on the north end of Lake Superior the lake freezes.  
In an hour or less. If you're lucky the canvas skin of

your canoe won't be torn by ice forming. Patience,  
so you can step out of the boat, walk home. You'll  
have to leave your canoe, retrieve it in the spring.  
So far away—

Untitled or *Introduction* (formerly *Conclusion*)

The snake curls in the grass. The sun, hot. The time, tomorrow then  
yesterday. Bougainvilleas and gardenias are overused like dreams,  
birthdays and mother—you and I—are there two faces or a vase?  
Don't ask. Don't leave candles burning unattended. The earth, really,  
it's round. See—once when I was a boy.