

# The Reading

*by* Jerry Ratch

His wife leans her head against a beam with her eyes closed  
while he reads out loud.

Her mouth shut tightly, almost twisted shut. She's so weary.  
She raises her collar and sinks further into her neck.

When he shouts, or explodes — nothing. Not a movement.  
Her mouth remains shut in a down-turned frown.

Now it's the last sonnet.  
Thank God it's over in 14 lines.  
We know we can go home. Soon  
it will be mercifully over.

10 more lines to go now!  
Only ten more lines!  
You can feel the excitement growing.

