

Monday, Sept. 13, 1993

Dear Tom,

I put together a memorial Stafford reading, then didn't have the pluck to participate. Wrote some grim stuff, then got to thinking about how Bill didn't care much for whiners. Was reading an interview with him and laughed out loud at his reply to a question about did he ever fear that he would "run out of ideas"... and then thought of his calling Hemingway a "crusty meringue pie" once in an interview I did with him. So I send my tribute poem to Bill Stafford.

Hope all is well with you. It's going to be a long fall. And October will not go by fast either. Keep well.

P.S. I don't think Harley would mind if I sent you his tribute poem to Bill Stafford.

Yours truly,
Stevens

The Last King

Choked down a tube of beans
at the local border shop
wiped his greasy

lips on the news.
This was living.
Two Siamese women
flanked his walker

dancing like vines
as he wrinkled toward exile.
Such surface jazz

is for the living.
The day he stepped off the earth
so did the last
Buffalo soldier

and the moon came
full twice in one month
and the name of it is Blue.

Harley Elliott