Every Poet Owes a Poem to Goya

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RAINY SUNDAY AFTERNOON OCTOBER

My wife asleep
this poem I work on
drives me into the street.
The poem is too much for me, too
heavy in me so I take it off, leave it in
the typewriter and wander out into
rain my body tight to bursting
with Gawain images inside
buttonless old coat
mind bursting
illuminations
to the shadows I
explore and frightened
in this place, an interloper
In Merlin country, my arms hang
stiff and corded with it. I wander
down the street the rain working on my
hair, soaking at the knots. Across the field
rugby practice, I go over to watch leaning against iron
post, wet now, clothes smelling of the incense
of yesterday's visitation and the rugby
kids kick the ball scrumming around
I know it's rugby the coach's
English voice leads his
armorless knights.
They rehearse
their various
deceptions and I
turn back toward the
house, more relaxed, walk
home, climb stairs see pumpkin
face in the door and
strings jerk tight
again. Typewriter clogged
with Gawain, I write
these thoughts
in notebook.

EVERY POET OWES A POEM TO GOYA

Every poet owes a poem to Goya.
Sunday morning, waking late,
I read Anne Sexton's *Love Poems*,
The funny papers and an
Englishman named Brock.

But for me it's Velasquez,
Painting the misery of
Inbred monarchy, an overshoot
Jaw, dwarf princess.

The rough equivalent, now,
Of painting a Semitic Jesus.