

A Rat's Life

i. innocence

snow-white recessive
generations from the wild
cool nose pokes the wire

food and drink appear
unearned. what is to be done
in untrying times?

inexperienced
pre-experimental boy
gnawing on his tail

ii. experiments

warn him with a beep
send shocks through half the cage floor --
he learns avoidance

turn up the voltage
shock the whole floor -- no escape --
he shivers and shits

bring in his brother
turn up the voltage on both --
they stand up and fight

iii. death

the expert in shock
can give no further data
the rat knows too much

snuff him out -- freeze him --
send him to Biology
thanks for all you've done

the rat's grave: a slab
of graph. the rat's epitaph:
a point on a curve