When we were lanky flesh and so much bone,
Learning held no thought of common sense,
And we wore happy sackcloth of our own,
Denying what we knew of penitence.
Today we come in black, but not for mourning,
Nor for the death of our schooled innocence,
But for a column kind of student warning,
A proclamation of our loyalty.
We, as graduates, are not for scorning
A school that has allowed us what we see.
On the contrary, we shall belong
To its future and what it will be
As well as to our past. It would be wrong
To dwell so on the present and forget
What is to come: our world is not yet strong;
There are no other vacant worlds to let.
What we must learn, perhaps, is that the days
When common life and common people set
The pace are gone and in their place a maze
Of complicated thoughts plays in a hide-
And-seek with our more solid, folksy ways.
Before the separation is too wide
Between our culture, art, church, life, and nation,
Let us of sixty-two stand on the side
Of a steady Christian liberal education,
Such as we've received, and even more,
Let's pull against the reins of specialization
That threaten to misguide our hearts and lore.
Instead let's keep alive traditions. When
The physicist thinks of atomic war,
Let him remember love of country in
The classics, how the Greeks and Trojans fought
As much for honor as they did to win,
Or how destroyed Roland burst our thought
With his heroic music. For our culture's
Sake the student of such history ought
To learn some science, otherwise dry vultures
which pick dead bones are all we can produce.
Let business majors try their hands at sculptures.
But let's not make each of these things a use.
What we are seeking is a common vision
For our culture and no weak excuse

For studying poetry or nuclear fission.
What generous learning can provide we need,
Them knowledge that gives freedom of decision,

And better bonds in word and thought and deed.
So as we graduate to artist, scholar,
Scientist, and businessman, the seed

That we are is sown with every dollar
Earned or spent by us. And every word
That we speak can make our culture taller

If we but choose to make our wisdom heard.