The Flummoxed Flummoxer

THOMAS DORSETT

Speckled guppies, young and old,
almost worthless, 12 cents each,
swimming in a tank of cold
water I brought from the sink.

The little males with dot brains seek
food and sex, pure fishthought, sex,
sex and food and nothing else—
Now I, their unseen god, bring Tubifex

worms, manna from heaven, live food—
Tearing innocence to shreds,
do they pause and think, thank God!
these worm balls taste like caviar?

Hell, no. Guppies gulp what grub they get
which they down between assaults
without remorse, without recourse
to Christfish who removes their faults—
No saviors here. No fishmind’s off kilter;
they do not fear death or seek God;
what crap they produce is removed by a filter.
And the females, do they swim to be thin

and beautiful? No—all they want is to eat
(even their children) and not be eaten:
to them Hitler is as good as Christ;
no gilled Eva Braun, no finned Mother Seton;

no love inside these goggle-eyed machines—
Yet one could be in a worse mess
than guppies. What—plus food and sex—makes
you, Mr. or Ms. Self-fish, more—and less?