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## Return of the Prodigal

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## RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

My friend's coming back.  
(I thought he would.)  
The job he coveted  
altered his status  
and forced him  
to put on a cloak of  
respectability  
he did not find  
comfortable.

He made it a point  
to retain his  
"Sixties" attitude  
long after others  
surrendered  
to Common Sense.

He drank a lot  
but wouldn't hurt a fly.  
I often wondered why  
he wasn't killed  
by a jealous boyfriend  
of some girl  
he "came on to" at the bar.

Quick to back off,  
he was like a puppy  
who couldn't stop wagging  
his tail  
in spite of what  
he had just done wrong.

He gambled,  
went on unplanned vacations,  
spent money foolishly,  
had a dog,  
raised Hell instead  
of children.

Maybe that's why  
I liked him so much.  
He  
did all the things  
I  
wanted to do.

— *Robert L. Gockman*