

Richard Terrill

AMERICAN

He would give you the shirt off his back
if he thought you wouldn't get it dirty.
He'd give you the dirt from his grave

if he thought he was ever going to die
and knew you wouldn't be there with a wad of spit
collecting in your dark cheek,

knew you wouldn't be there holding a pistol
in the dark streets of his smoking city,
wired to a bomb in the bright districts

of his rubble on TV.
He drinks a quart of milk a day,
never been sick in his life!

Canadians flock to his doctors;
up there birds die in the streets.
He has worked so hard to get

what is his that others want. Opportunity
is a door neither open nor closed,
but silver or gold, and in reach.

In his church, no one asks
God's blessing
but exclaims why it is so.

In his story one moon rises, sure and shining.
He thinks he's at a dinner party,
and everyone else is too in awe to leave.