

The Bureaucrats

by Roque Dalton

The bureaucrats swim in a stormy sea of boredom.

Behind their hideous yawns they're the first to murder tenderness
they end up with sick livers and die clutching the telephone
their yellow eyes pinned to the clock.

They have exquisite handwriting and buy themselves neckties
they suffer strokes when they find out that their daughters masturbate
they owe their tailor bill they're barflies
they read the Reader's Digest and Neruda's love poems
they attend the Italian opera they bless themselves
they sign strong anti-Communist manifestos
adultery is their undoing they commit suicide without pride
they profess faith in sports and are ashamed
terribly ashamed
that their father was a carpenter