

HE TELLS HIS MOTHER WHAT HE'S WORKING ON

I'm writing a poem about you.

You are? What's it about?

It's the story about your childhood, the horses in the river.

The ones that nearly drowned? . . . I saved them.

You told it to me just a few weeks ago.

I should dig up more of my memories.

I wish you would.

*Like when I lived on the farm and one of the girls fell
down the well?*

Yes.

I forget if it was Rose or Pauline—it was a deep well.

I remember that story.

Have you finished your poem?

I'm still working on it.

You mean you're correcting it, with commas and semi-colons?

Exactly.

When can I see it?

As soon as it's finished.

Is it an epic?

It's not that long.

*No, I mean all my thoughts, the flashes of what's going
through my life, the whole family history . . . living
through the woe, the river and the water.*

I know.

Will it be published?

I have to finish it first.

*It's better to write about real life, that's more important
than writing something fanciful.*

I try to write all my poems about real life.

You see, the apple never falls far from the tree.

I guess not.

You're my apple.

There's probably a worm crawling through that apple.

Then it's got something sweet to chew on.

Well, you're my tree.

Yes, I'm your tree—you're an apple, I'm a tree.

—Lloyd Schwartz (from *Cairo Traffic*)