*JOHN CIARDI*

*SUBURBAN*

Yesterday Mrs. Friar phoned."Mr. Ciardi,
how do you do?" she said. "I am sorry to say
this isn't exactly a social call. The fact is
your dog has just deposited-forgive me-
a large repulsive object in my petunias."

I thought to ask, "Have you checked the rectal grooving
for a positive I.D.?" My dog, as it happened,
was in Vermont with my son, who had gone fishing-
if that's what one does with a girl, two cases of beer,
and a borrowed camper. I guessed I'd get no trout.

But why lose out on organic gold for a wise crack
"Yes, Mrs. Friar," l said, "I understand."
"Most kind of you," she said. "Not at all," I said.
I went with a spade. She pointed, looking away.
"I always have loved dogs," she said, "but really!"

I scooped it up and bowed. "The animal of it.
I hope this hasn't upset you, Mrs. Friar."
"Not really," she said, "but really!" I bore the turd
across the line to my own petunias
and buried it till the glorious resurrection

when even these suburbs shall give up their dead.