

POEM FOR A NEO-CONSERVATIVE

What do you say we find where
we part company
on the edge of civility.

It would be nice if we could develop
distinctions as clear
as when sperm joins egg.

A set of boundaries, let's say,
between long-term effects
and short-term gains.

If we could, for example, hone
the edges of the contradictions
between profit and pollution.

Or if we could say that just here
is where the reversible deal
becomes irreversible damage.

Or fix and never cross the margin
where the product is so cheap
that it cheapens the consumer,

formerly the customer. Once we
establish these precise demarcations
we give the list to children

to study all through school
in ever-greater detail
and then respect their decisions.

The problem, my friend,
as we part company,
is that for now you are in charge,

defrauding the American people
as you play upon their ignorance
and build our legacy of shame.