

Peter Sparks

Exam Room Villanelle

I fear I am not in my perfect mind:
As examiners so cruelly,
In the chilling hall where I'm confined,

Tell us to start the task assigned
For three grim hours. For my degree
I fear I am not in my perfect mind

As I try to get my brain on line,
Searching amongst my fact-debris.
In the inky hall where I'm confined

As my pen moves blankly line to line
Controlled by the wrist of an amputee,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.

The questions posed are so unkind:
Parse—calculate—discuss . . . I see
In the panic hall where I'm confined

My friends have piled up eight or nine
Close-written sheets, but as for me
I fear I am not in my perfect mind
In the lonely hall where I'm confined.