

## THE SADNESS OF YOUTH

By Matthew Graham

Tonight walking my dog I heard  
Several young women call my name  
With an enthusiasm I haven't heard in years.  
I turned toward their porch with a smile  
And almost waved until I saw the kid  
Struggling biblically up the sidewalk  
With a case of beer.  
His long hair and straggly beard could have been mine  
Forty years ago when all I shared  
With Christ was poverty.  
I turned the corner thinking of Elliot,  
Of Prufrock, the mermaids and all that  
"I do not think that they will sing to me" stuff.  
Elliot at his best, I guess, writing about age  
Before he got old.  
And then what? I thought of my namesake  
A fat and vilified tax collector for the Romans  
Who dropped everything  
To follow that strange young man  
Who heard voices in the night.  
And then I thought of my name  
In the mouths of those girls  
One last time.