tiny i

I

there is a vietnam and a middle east
a watts and a venerable south
there is a russia and a china
a degaulle and a johnson
an assassin and a saint

somehow these seep unrest down
to the somewhere i am
the sometime gulf
the catch-all flood for every wave and tide
inundated
it is i who read and am read to
talked to, talked of
talked up even
but it's all talk where i am concerned
(except for the sometimes when i am used)

i am for some reason or other
the subject of it all—
subjected is more like it.

where am i or ought i?
II

i am all i am is

a tiny i

the way i feel

frustrated

because of all about

so much so large so big so impossible

i want to be honest about why i stand here

so incredibly frustrated at least

(“Every massive problem demands a massive solution.”)
III

i grow a beard or i shave real clean
and wear a tie or i make a scene
but it's all because
i don't want to be
tiny i

would i be so frustrated if i knew what human nature
was about really
that it's not about countries, or wars, or races,
or personalities even
but it's about other tiny i's
like myself

i say “amen” or i mouth a shriek
and boo the boss or i maim his pickets
but it's all because
i don't want to be
tiny i

tiny i's do not see how infinitely large the picture of
this universe must be to escape being titled “In Vain”
tiny i

is when you realize
you’re living in the twentieth century
and can do nothing about it.

—Timothy Mahoney, O.P.