The rain came harder.
The meadow became a surface of water.
At its end, a maple
in a burst of wind dropped its leaves
in a golden replica of itself. Apple trees
wet and shaking, reached their ankles
into the temporary lake of rain.

Harvey yawned and thought,
The rain's slowing the work,
and in spite of him, his eyes shut.



DAVID AND MARY HOTTENSTEIN LOOK BACK

David and Mary step with son Davy
over the clover, the bee-humming field.
The East Penn Valley
stretches before them
to the ridge of mountains to the east
beyond which lies their own Butter Valley,
Bally and its outstemming roads—
the doctor's roads. Above them,
a few scattered thunderheaded clouds
shadow the level land.
The graveyard is a square of farmland,
death sequestered by a wall.
As they approach the wall,
"Look at the Canadian thistles," Mary says.
Thorn and brier and half the stones flat:
In this fastness of the field
weeds push up life
where five generations lie dead.

The original David Hottenstein
bought some five hundred acres
and built a small house nearby, now gone.
The main house, built later, was called

"the plantation house." David goes
to the stone of the elder David.
The inscription on it:
"wurde geboren in Europa—"
("was born in Europe—")
Seven generations
are the line from him to this David:
four doctors—before that, planters.
To the left of the first planter, close
along the wall, he can see stones without names
that tradition says are those
of two Negro slaves. It could be.
A few did have slaves.
He and Mary and Davy
pick their way through thistles
to two graves
where a later Hottenstein and his wife
had coats of arms carved on marble to give
a snowy memento of their lineage.
In front of the upright stones
two marble slabs, crumbling,
make for each a mattress on the ground.
"I like these graves," Mary says.

They go now
to the final stone of Edward, David's grandfather.
When David was a boy, from a window,
being too young to attend the funeral,
he saw the winding line of mourners
and saw the doctor's body being lowered
into the ground, and cried.
He had loved his grandfather,
smooth-shaven, gaunt, with a mind
burning and venturing.
His grandfather wrote in the margin
of a textbook on obstetrics:
"Have noticed if I dip my hands in quicklime
after attending a case of childbirth fever,
I don't carry the fever to another."
He was a knowledgeable herbalist.
In a time of scarce drugs,
he got his own drugs from the earth.

Seeing a plant at a certain growth,
its curative virtue at its height,
he would dismount from his horse and cut or dig it
and put it in his box.
David had seen that box
about which his father had told him.
I ought to have it, he thinks.

He and Mary leave the stone
and carry Davy to the graveyard wall
and stand him on it. There the three-year child
smiles down the vale of Maxatawney
as they hold his hard young legs.



THE LIFE OF DR. BENJAMIN SCHULTZ

Benjamin Schultz was born July twentieth,
seventeen seventy-two,
in Upper Hanover Township,
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania,
first of seven children.
Abraham, his father,
was learned, and though a farmer,
was a one-time Representative
in the General Assembly of the Commonwealth.
At first
he himself taught Benjamin at home
in German. Then the boy went to the excellent
Schwenkfelder School System
under George Kriebel. Though no school year
ran more than four months,
he "got" an English that, unsure at first,
eventually enabled him
to write and speak as well
as the leading men of his time
in that new country, the United States.
In seventeen ninety-two
he was accepted as a student
at the Pennsylvania Hospital.