

ROBERT KING

## Open Spaces

I sit down at the Vietnamese restaurant  
accidentally facing the full-mirrored wall.

Two men at each of two other tables  
sit with their backs to themselves

but I have only me, face-on, and I'm  
amazed at how large the world is

behind me. I look at myself seriously.  
I look serious. I begin to eat.

I am huge in the glass with my tiny plate  
but I am small in the room where,

if it were a globe, I would be  
about the size of Vietnam.

There are two rooms. I am in both.  
There's no escaping me. Have I hauled

this huge emptiness around with me  
all my life? Is this what the others saw

that I could not? Why they loved me  
or why they didn't? When I leave,

I know what people passing me think:  
so alone he seems, with that enormous

ache of air trailing along—behind him,  
everything else in the world.