

### Swenson's *THE UNIVERSE*

Although it may at first appear formless, even chaotic as it crawls down the page, "The Universe" is an experiment in form. If we skim it quickly from top to bottom, we see four embedded columns: a "what" column, an "about" column, a "the universe" column (which is also a "because" or "be cause" column), and a "we think" column. Unlike most free-verse poems, in which line beginnings create a straight-line vertical left margin, "The Universe" has no meaningful left margin. It does, however, have something resembling a straight-line vertical right margin. If we hold the poem up to a mirror, noting the way it lies on the page, it more nearly resembles a poem using conventional typography. "The Universe," then, is a reflection, a mirror image of what we expect to see when we look at the poem. Is this also what we see when we look at the universe? May Swenson's highly, though idiosyncratically, structured poem implicitly raises and answers this question.

Hansen, Tom. "Swenson's The Universe." *The Explicator*. Web. 22 Sept. 2011.