Two poems by Professor Robert Canzoneri

The Unloved
When I would squat by holes and piles of dirt crumbling clods, ready to insert bare roots of shrubs, she'd soil my vegetable dreams: this adolescent dog approaching albino would worm under my arm with motive I know too but bury in pride, curl both head and tail toward me begging to be fed love at both extremes.

Neither was an end unto itself, or small dogs one might do as well for; a car front struck her fore part like a match that spurs red fire and dies, curdled a batch of blood out from one end and knocked oval feces out the other. Shocked, arrested at the waste, I swore a herbist vow; but now I felt the still unserviced bitch for lack of pulse and breath. I coiled her limp into a hamper, saw it soiled with drying blood. She stiffened in a curl, never having learned a nicer girl could hope to stay unspaded, yet behave. With too much heat I dug a rounded grave.

One Lion, Once
Ho, Androcles! What do you say went on From when the lion scratched off in the dust Toward you as meat and bone And, roaring to his lean and hungry guts The end of grumbling wait, Bore down? What shifted in those preying eyes As, closing, you grew featured And the features made a face? What lies Would not reach truth too late But failed the heated lion's sight, as face
Became not one man’s meat,
But Androcles?
We could ask Plato, looking back, to place
The abstract qualities
Of this into a scheme: how many rungs
Of love a beast can seize
In one great charge, to land (with rasping lungs
And flesh starved to his bones)
Muzzling like a milk-fed cat at ease
Against you on your knees.