

CHARLES WALKER

Professor of Frogs' Lives

Charles Walker died alone
as he lived,
polite, small, quiet,
holding secrets,

writing precisely, impeccably,
in the Herpetology Division's
Great Book of Accessions, he and it
nestling together in the familiar cranny
among the black-shining counter tops
of the splendid old Commons Room,
Charles sometimes merely listening,
assuaging his loneliness,
concealing his reluctance
to participate.

At the party for the one
chosen to take Kybe's place,
Charles and I sat together;
I commented into the
conversation just once.

In a flash he turned his
unjoyous, inebriated
countenance directly
to mine, too close,
saying level-eyed, carefully,
and as usual with stern accuracy,

"Why are you so intense?"

There is no issue!"

