

MAGCITY

MAG CITY 11

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State of
Ohio

Department of
Education

Division of
Instruction

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Special Education

Division of
Technology

DISSOLVES

Frightened of the dark, a dog barks in the night,
a child wakes and asks for a bottle of
juice but her parents are still sleeping.
The apartment was so small my parents slept on
a bed in the living room, I had to crawl
into the closet to use the phone which was
in the foyer or go down to the local drugstore
if I wanted my privacy (so-called). "Is
Allegra there?" I whispered. "She's not home, Lew"
her father said. The booth filled with smoke
and the smoke filled my head as I shifted my weight
from one foot to another, lit a cigarette
and watched the local bookie swivel towards me
on a stool, a woman in a white apron
apply a sponge to the crumbs on the counter.
"Tuck me in," I called out in the middle of the night,
and my mother swept in like an angel from the living room
to lift the covers and smooth them down around
my chin. It was dark; I had to pee, but I was frightened
of the short hallway with the two closets
(clothing and linen) leading to the bathroom
so woke my sister and told her to "watch me"
while I went. Night, but not late, I walked
home from the drugstore, passed apartment buildings
draped in ivy and the cars on the parkway buzzing by.
Soon enough I'd be one of them, driving nowhere fast; alone,
at the wheel, with the window open, on a summer night.
I take a 12-ounce can of juice from the freezer, peel
off the lid and spoon the concentrate into a half-gallon
container, measure three cans of cold water into the container
shake it up, fill my daughter's bottle with juice,
and go back to bed.

HOUSE OF HORRORS

The robber who breaks in
and does something dangerous (sexual
fantasy), today
I unlocked the door
of a house that wasn't
mine in search of a hair
dryer to thaw our pipes
and found in the man's house, our
landlord's house, no less
the man we rent from who's never here
a person disliked by everyone or so
we've heard but didn't know
when we first came here
having been steered in this direction
by a friend of a friend, a
person who's a doctor, at least
that's his profession (a doctor who testifies
at trials in defense
of children who've
committed crimes, a doctor
of children, so to speak),
just a guy who was once married
and had a son so we found
out later and even published a book
of interviews he did
with divorced people (that's
him, there he is, he shows up
with his girlfriend, they fight, we
hear them fight because
we live behind the door, it's not necessary
to eavesdrop to hear them fight)
This is the person who's house
I entered in search of a hair dryer
unlocking the door with the key
he gave us in case of emergency (undefined)
the house of a man who has a sometimes girl-
friend, but no wife, a rich man, or a man
who's well off (self-satisfied),
a man who I once saw with a hair dryer in his hand
trying to thaw his own pipes, and who stared
at me, commiseratingly
helpless as I was
at the time
so knew it existed, where

does one keep a hair
dryer, a blow
dryer? you keep it in the bathroom where else, and
the bathroom's up a flight of steps
now I have to smile
I climbed those steps and saw a door
(closed) I opened it
to an unmade bed and book-
shelves with clothing and
magazines strewn around, it
was his bedroom, as he
had left it, no hair dryer
to be found, only
magazines with women in peculiar
poses, baring their
private parts, which
to my eyes
looked like roses,
and which I opened--there were
so many of them (staring
over my shoulder, I must admit)
when I should have been
searching for the fucking
hair dryer which as it turned out
didn't exist except in
one of the magazines there
was a picture of a woman fucking
with what looked
like a hair dryer so we bought
one for ourselves at the pharmacy
for \$16.50. In the kitchen
I meant to tell you there was a
cuisinard and in another upstairs
bedroom a television with alot
of cassettes of old Chaplin movies and
you could have dropped a pin
I would have jumped as I thumbed
through the tapes of pornographic
films stacked high. He'll
never know I wrote this
poem, but you will, and hopefully
you'll get a laugh
though it's five below
in Henniker, New Hampshire
clear sky under full moon
and the pipes still frozen.

Split My Sides

In public
I might add

The voluminous
Substance of euphoria

Then, I'd even settle,
For the modulated white light

Of the weirdly ecstatic calm
Settling in

After epiphany
I'm not particular.

For and To

I wish all my hopes possible now
is all, to be increased
to blaze in perfumed ears
like a plenitude's strength or beauty
there, to be serious
not shadowed in the brilliant day
and done with evasion when you look
at any man, as other boys
and girls must suffer or must celebrate
a want or wish; I hope
a hop off into space
strutted by millenium's tack.
Fame, at home, in my spare time
I must walk out on, having no relation
to my affairs, clearly, and now
as before, and hidden
like the future, wish all my hopes
possible, and to be happy
with resolution and even weakness
with what landed me and hung around

The Ballad of Lazlo Toth

With 5
or 6

well-
placed

blows
he

knocked
off

the
marble

Virgin's
nose.

Almost Seen

The phenomenal
Constructees
Of our time
See
The Hawaiian wood
Rose
Fused cosmos.

You eat

peyote
for presque vu
Ingest the hard button
'moons'

Or
Chew
Ample
Gel caps
Minute ampules
Of solid what...

Oh

Fine un-
Blind
Medicinal blends!

We take your vision
Like trusting lovers

Perpetual moment

Hovers.

Idealism

Dated from Madeira and already world famous here I start
Forever in tears with armfuls of huge Italian flags

SIT DOWN SHUT UP

Who
do you
think I am?

F-11?

Brain Salad Surgery

"I stared at the potatoes for a while,
and came to a fuller understanding
of modern art."

Richard Huelsenbeck

Red fit Zen
you sock me in
a lib Jap hem

a fizz pit dock
of beans in the quiet
moola ear

where eons vie
an aero quim tie
bug wise hock laps

on Viet anus you
imagine a Fudd
lobe wreck

the synap fueds
that imbue a geo
virile ack ow

and fuel doer naps
that hoot wax
and gack bum nine

as odors pan
umbilica kin hugs
to vex eye awe

and doors bulge
mica nike toes
wan pixy ha

and vulgar
Ike canoes fume
timid neon hobo yap

the lugar pablum
of meant nose ode
yikes

to rage Lulu meat
and hose open
the wok fib

you mope snooze
ululate the gam
fever jinx

you ok phobic zoos
amble the geek
detour avenues

as Bambi eek
ooze huns lope
avid doggie rot

ascend with zonk
hue palm goo
eeioouuuu

and eiaaooooo
O oxy fog trancs
wobble end up

in your kupf
bellows of ovum
tinge a feral daze!

DOWN IN FIGIG

An expensive bare leg
can always be glimpsed
in their rare red slippers
"You been in America
mister Sheecago
 Buffo
 San Lowie
 Anhueo
 Philadelfwee?

I Sudan man sponse you give me money
Whingtone is my home."
I handed in a half dozen coppers
bowing down he walked away jangling his symbols
"...food is so cooked it can easily be broken..."
There are strangers in the palm trees

 in this out of the way land
 a muskmelon
 a bowl of ripe dates
in hand... Having landed we commenced
with that pacing old donkey of a man.
 Lo!

 a bottle a band
the power of speech he had not
the walls were as high as my head I recall
diving into them those walls
not the first savage time blushing in comfort

 Honk Honk!
 we are off
 are we men
or beasts of the road
running to get out of our way?
In the ruts the goods are French
 strange unearthly promenades
 into the dusk
jaunty uniforms, pantaloons the color of brick
Grissette!
the French dandy is here
he is wearing white trousers
 like great flowers
 14 yards away an ordinary pair
plowed and harrowed and pulverized by cultivation
they seldom sadden men of the bath

men of the tea men of the waters
men of the bed men of the mat
madmen
ring bells as they go

MAUREEN OWEN

Bedtime

I have this power At night
I kiss three people minutes later
they are all sound asleep the bizarre
& the miraculous are the same thing.

Because Therefore So

If You Wear A Hat In The House You Are Warmer Than If You Don't

Because it must be the baby speaking petitioning
Jack's Mom "But Mom.....these beans are good beans
They're magic!....the old woman gave me...magic beans!" It
is radiant on his head Apparently the heat in
the body slips through the holes in the skull & Rises
that's why Sean O'Casey is always photographed with
a hat on But O Science You ventriloquist! Paroxysms
of sunlight ignite this blond mist of curls & I
have to weep for the sentimental and maudlin one last time!
tho the Southern New England Telephone Company has delivered
a message "That lucky ol' sun just rolls around heaven all
day but now it will be followed every second
by a big silver saucer!" Therefore by reflection
each shape completes itself continues along the
Silver Ridge Trail traceable through the woods by
the circular lids of tin cans nailed to the trunks of the
Hemlocks & Tulip. So I want to thank the sheep
who has eaten all the maroon & adjectival The white
pine for not being white. Now that I am master of the
dotted quarter note preceeding the eighth note I thank
the baby for pouring into the small popsicle mold the
large pitcher of grape juice & Patrick dressing
singing

"I know a woman named Lucky Pierre she
used to cut my hair."

JACK COLLOM

self-portrait

the knight,
shaking and smiling,
vomited as he zigzagged through
the yellow grass.

he is coming straight at you;
he is there,

he is in you,
he is you,

now what are you going to do?
as you turn around the corners of stone become silver.

grocery store, grocery store,
o visionary gem in your warm bright light!
he is, I am coming like a comic hulk,
a jiggerbeam of sunbeam high in the dusk, like
the sweet white shadow of an orange.

he said, "I'm going to go,
I have many things to do.

"I am freezing in this darkness." and he
did catch a fish, and I caught a fish, and they
caught a fish and you

have described it. he fell, lay still.

tough nut

jagged old home that I live in
with a lovely young calico cat
Queen of waters turning and turning
burned by the rope around her waist
red rug and the stacks of books
(premature firecrackers down the block)
old rhythms and a nervy laugh
private ice is like a pirate on land
not exactly nice like goo-goo in the operetta
it's no use, the temperature's gone down
and now summer is here, like an agreement
the telephone (black) on the floor, the paper, the
records leaning two ways, the tunnel
to the bathroom, with its reversed creation
and a shock of recognition when the morning sun
comes breaking and reassembling through the trees-of-heaven

In a Nick of Time

My mother became pregnant with me, by my father I presume, when she was livin in Brooklyn and had me over in Saint Vincent's Hospital in Greenwich Village, a year after Dylan Thomas died there in '53. Roller skating as soon as I could walk. Kids come from other blocks asking to see the "baby on skates." I remember being a fetus, the tingling of sound and the sudden sweeping delta. Baths in basins, mother's soft hands washing me, smiling with thick Joan Crawford lipstick, gentle voice'd, rinsing the soap suds from my body with warm palmfuls of water. Move to Long Island when I am two. Hit five home runs in one little league game, age five. Lite small brush fire, accidentally, age six, and run home crying to mother not to turn me in to the police. Baseball in open fields. Climb trees where I find sling-shot & won't return it to the neighborhood bully until his father drives up to our house and demands it back. Memories on Grandma Annie's knee. Suburbs till ten...city life after that... school, sandlots, street fights, religious services. Basketball, summers Upstate, assorted jobs--dishwasher, bus boy, gate boy, cantor. At seventeen I become sick of rabbis who ask us Is five minutes of Pleasure worth going to Hell for? Kicked out of classes repeatedly for talking out of turn, "disrespect," "disobedience," un-cut hair and poor excuses for missing prayer services and school on Sunday--sometimes I just don't lie good enough.

After junior year I fly to Europe. My rabbi says I will lose my soul. I lose my poncho, which is like the shedding of some old skin. Hitch-hiking, riding bicycle from Amsterdam to Paris through authentic Dutch windmill'd country side, Belgium, French vineyards, long tunnel two countries, run naked with others in Italian cornfield, British girl secretly handles me under blanket in van while her Bronx boyfriend is screwing her, he gets up to pee, looks at us and says: "I'm going outside for a few minutes & I don't want any fooling around." We all three smile and that's exactly when I come. Spend one night in Italian jail with 30 or so other wanderers who are sleeping out behind the Rome Youth Hostel in a dilapidated, deserted building painted on it, facetiously: Roma Hilton. After 3 a.m. bust and interrogation, those without money get a free train ride to the border, since I show some bucks I can stay in town but must report back to cops every few days to prove I'm not broke (& thus a likely thief) but leave the country instead, heading north, carnival day in Sienna where the driver, Sean Hennessey from Canada, drops acid and with me and nine others races 'round rain-slick Swiss curves singing, "This land is your land, this land is my land, from California to the New York Island..." over and over again as sun sets like luminescent ping-pong ball on the edge of the hiway. To Amsterdam, and back to New York where yeshiva friends see my back pack and growing hair and say with Jewish accents, half derogatorily, half enviously, "You look like a hippie!" Since I'd been kicked outa school lots for what they considered long hair, I take 1950's "close crop" and play it low key to graduate. Graduate. Summer job in Jamaica drugstore, then my father needs help in his new drugstore so I help out there, too, in hot summer sweat, until he gets drunk one night and drugged too probably, & doesn't understand why I am not speaking to him- because he has been ungrateful of my services and is mean to me. He starts shoutin through my bedroom door

that I am a "Bum!" & he shouts it more 'n once & my mother sewing says, "Why ya askin me why he isn't talkin to ya--ask him." "He's a BEACH BUM!" he shouts again & I cry briefly and my older brother says, "Oh, he doesn't mean it."

Couple of months later my father tells me to get out of his house--he pays the bills and doesn't want me around. This is after an argument in which I tell him not to shout at me and he storms up to me, chest to chest. I am afraid I might take a swing and lay my old man out, but I don't want to fight at any cost, that's when he gives me the thumb, and I am glad to go, afraid of all the cursin & drinkin I'd seen him do and yellin at/with my mother, destruction, violence--wheew! I am glad to be goin but my mother, wet-eyed, begs me to stay, please, I need you. I stay and staying is the only thing I've ever regretted doing.

After that I cry in bed every night and my knees shake when I think of going home, I have a job in which I can't remember anything the boss or anyone else tells me to do. The boss doesn't know what's gotten into me, suddenly I can't remember where any of the stock is, even if it has just been pointed out five minutes earlier. I can't recall who hands me what. To customers who are prescribed cough medicine I hand birth control pills, and vice versa.... I am unable to make friends at school my first year at college, I am nervous and self-conscious and tho' for 18 years I'd had all the confidence in the world, now I have none. Parents continue to fight and mother cries to me her sad stories, midnight...one a.m....go to sleep in tears and in the morning hallway pass my father who sneers "conspirator," "traitor," "bum."

After year of that I go away to the mountains and when I come back in late August, fly to Israel. The lift off is the biggest orgasmic experience I've ever had. Take downer prior to flight, eat a non-kosher meal and in a few minutes in the air fall asleep, waking next day in Palestine. Machine guns at airport. Rat-a-tat-tat in my brain. Write from steps of post office long love letter to girlfriend in the states, teary-eyed, homesick: the Israeli army will draft me if I stay in Israel more than two years. A month later, war breaks out. I hoe weeds in pre-dawn darkness on agricultural community, a "moshav," and deliver plastic garbage bags in Jerusalem to impoverished families of daughters who cry and mothers who don't cry--they'd been through it before, I hadn't been through it before and I cry. They invite me in (whether I cry or not) and offer food and drink, well-kept poor homes and not all of the sons return, and some come back bare foot in the back of military trucks with a pile of other corpses, barefoot because they were taken by surprise. '73 October War. I leave Israel in January on a ship that is hard to get on. The dock itself is almost impenetrable, barbed wire fences and tight security but a little Jewish man on the street tells me ways of getting into the dock, he raises his forefinger like a soothsayer, he knows the in's & out's, he is on the street hustling, buying clocks & ties & radios from tourists and selling clocks & ties & radios to other tourists. "Hey mister" (that's me he's talkin to) "wanna buy a wristwatch? Here, give ya good deal. No? Got anything to sell? a radio? a clock?" When I tell him why I'm in Haifa, he tells me how to get into port. Finally get to the landing docks, up the gangway, but can't get past the watchman to ask anyone about a job. I go back to the street hustler who says in heavy Yiddish accent with lots of thick saliva in his throat, "Aaron Rosenfeld, Aaron Rosenfeld--he's the only one who can get you on a ship," & gives me shipping agent Aaron Rosenfeld's address whose workers I visit and after hours and days of bugging them, give me the note I need to

seek employment. "But it's no use," an elderly office clerk admonishes, "if they needed another deck hand they would've wired ahead--NOW GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!" he says in very clear English. Once on deck, an old hatted man with a limp takes me up, up, up where I meet the captain, doff my cap, bow, give him my name and act very respectful, practically hold my breath, stomach in. The captain, in his isolated Ahab hole of an office, cables ahead to New York to see if I've ever been in the slam, agrees to take me aboard if I sign papers indicating that when we arrive in N.Y. and I get bumped, replaced that is, by someone with more union experience than I have (I have no union experience at all), the merchant marines isn't responsible for flying me back to Israel. So I sign this piece of paper and work 21 days and 21 nights and get off in New York...with lotsa money...a "bundle."

Back up to Boston to see girlfriend from summer before and she says forget it, "it" meaning our relationship. I leave but don't forget it. No, I cry all the way through bluey Berkshires in February snow. Dylan's "Planet Waves" has just come out and I cry to it. "I must take a good hard look at..a map"--hold one against window and leave next day for New Orleans, Mardi Gras. Drink beer with friends I bump into down there. First night unknown I sleep in church crash in same room with 40 or more old, sickly men, wheezing & coughing from drink and smoke, rotted skin and warped bones seen in communal showers, rashes, drooping eyelids, curved spines, flat feet, knock knees, empty eyes, distorted joints, no teeth, garbled voices, thwarted gait, sunken chests, clogged ears. I sleep with my money in pants pocket on top bunk bed but methinks the tight security is unnecessary 'cause I don't think any of these guys has any strength left to climb up and reach for the booty. Some sleep in doorways of church, all of them eat breakfast there, mush and milk, a diet so meager in nutritional value no wonder they need medical help so badly. I run into my friends, we smoke, hang-out in apartment on Decatur Street in the French Quarter, stained glass, high arcing ceilings, hardwood floors. The guy who rents the place is from New York, a professor of English at a university down there and has interesting books and record albums and is sleeping with my friend's sister who is married to someone else, George, back in New York.

After Mardi Gras everything goes crash--beer cans, spirits & anyone who is left there. I am left there. I take a dim-lit, naked bulb, torn shade, broken bed spring room on Bleecker, I mean...Bourbon Street, read Marx and socialize with a stripper who is very motherly and sews a patch on my sleeping bag where I had stuck my feet in the fire place a few nights before sleeping on Decatur St. There are no jobs, not even cheap jobs. Then, through Manpower day labor, I am sent to work in a grave yard, "Ever work in a grave yard before, son?" and dig a grave and find a skull and bones all ready interred. Charles Schmidt. The grave yard proprietor, when I call him over to show him this unexpected occupancy, responds: "The Hell I care!" Seems as though there's a custom in the South of using the same burial plot over and over again, "keep it in the family," and on top of Charles Schmidt is going to be his grand-daughter. The service begins, prayers and praises are made, newcomers kiss relatives they haven't seen in a while and stand alongside the event. The casket is ground level, suspended over the site by straps. When the family leaves, the straps are removed but the casket is too large for the hole and doesn't drop. I am pushing and pushing. The proprietor comes over, cigar in mouth, and starts banging. "Get Down Grandma!" he screams. He demands I stand my full weight on the copper coffin, but that doesn't help either. It

is stuck solid. Finally, the proprietor, another worker in a little white cap and I all jump and jump as hard as we can until a half hour later when the casket goes down, all ben' up.

That's the only funeral I've ever worked at.

The next day at dusk I hitch-hike from dusty, windy city irritating my contact lenses, depressed and non-talkative. A guy with his head shaved and shoeless picks me up when my back is to him and my thumb isn't even out, taking me all the way to Houston telling me about his guru in Tijuana and the gypsy life he's been living from San Diego to Houston where his son and girlfriend live, to Miami, back to Houston to see if his girlfriend and son will return with him to San Diego. For a few hundred miles he speaks continuously of Jesus's beauty, one leg tucked under butt. When we stop to eat he offers to buy me and the other guy he picked up, a meal, and the other guy, who has just gotten out of jail in Louisiana for hitch-hiking and carrying a weapon of some kind, accepts. In Houston, I don't mix with other hitch-hiking guy's vibes, he grabs maps and asks bus attendants for free things and won't take no for an answer--so I walk away on my own & have a bowl of tinted soup in the bus depot restaurant, and sleep that night in a room with a big hole in the wall which is better than the room I am to have in California which has a big hole in the bed itself. I am silent and depressed and thinking how far away are New York and Boston and here I am in Texas! It is dry. Buses cost 50¢. I'm not interested in the Astrodome. I sleep in a field the next night behind a holiday inn and wake up in the morning, startled in the mirror, with a swollen jaw probably from a bug bite. Through Oklahoma to OKC overnight visit with cousin from Flushing, New York, miss tornado by a few hours, but the next day hit what is close to if not a hurricane in the March Oklahoma panhandle, Sunday, no gas (oil shortage) but I forget there's an oil shortage and can't figure out why there are no cars. I am freezin. Hail hurling from sky, bruising protective forearm over head, cracking against elbow. An onslaught! Make it sloshing wet to a gas station that has a dryer and clothes line--in goes the clothes, a candy machine, pop out some potato chips and watch the NCAA basketball semi-finals on color t.v.

The clothes are not quite dry when I'm standing in an underpass alongside the interstate and a man stops his car to pick me up in the pouring rain. There is something funny and suspicious about the way he slowly comes to a halt--right in the middle of the road, not even bothering to pull over. He is drunk and running away from his wife and two little boys. I ask him if he wants to drive to California, and then feel like a creep for trying to be an opportunist in this man's sad situation. He says he doesn't feel like going to California. Soon he starts cryin and leaves me off someplace in Texas where he turns around because "How are my kids gonna feel when they don't see me in the morning?"

Holed up in old western run down hotel in Amarillo, a hotel that only a few years earlier is the fanciest in town, but then the son took over and let it go. Walnut doors and door jambs. Torn rugs. Large frame beds big enough to fit Wyatt Earp. Semi-annual towels. Wash basin, my own room, I hate to leave. First driver offers to blow me but he is a couple of years too soon and I say no. But I do look at his magazines. Lunch with proselytizing Jamie somebody who offers me all sorts of weird pamphlets; I eat bacon just to prove to myself that I am no longer orthodox. Storm again, in

Texas panhandle, with 16 year old boy runaway from Washington to Miami and on to San Francisco. We get pelted by hail, nearly frostbite walking miles of deserted hiway. At a rest stop man in car pulls gun on my hitch-hiking partner, then drives away. Finally, man in van on way to motorcycle contest picks us up and leaves us in Tucumcari, N.M. where J.P. and I see Woody Allen movie and take motel room. He wears pink shirt but says I don't hav'ta worry, he isn't a fag, but I think, by the way he says it, that he probably does like men, but I don't care either way he's safe to be with. I awake earlier than J.P. and on my way out leave two bucks on night table as he is almost penniless (he is penniless, I payed for the movie last night) and I have fifty dollars or so which goes down to 40 after week in S.F. which is sadly repeated here, briefly: Howard Street free crash through church hand-out in bed with bugs and ripped mattress and scummy sheets and towels and broken windows. I stay most of the day on Market Street in the Tenderloin near the Greyhound bus terminal, drinking wine on my pavement ass, and scoring hash with two other scraggly white boys from black dope dealer with big hat & peacock feather in band. The other two guys I see again in charity kitchens. They spend all their money and even some gold fillings, in Reno, gambling. "Done go t'Reno 'less ya got plenny a money," one of them says with gaping holes in his teeth. I meet man in Jack-in-the-Box who carries purple satchel and sweats nervously when he tells me he has stomach cancer. His father died of stomach cancer and a doctor in Wyoming told him six months ago that he has cancer too and unless he goes into the hospital for operations, radiation and whatever else they might decide to do, he is gonna die. Since then he hasn't been anywhere near Wyoming. But taking busses through Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, now California and on up to Washington. His eyes are opened wide, red, raspy and wired. He offers to buy a bottle of wine and share it back at the "hotel". I agree and we walk. He has barrel chest and strides astute, like he's in the army. Army boots. Cuffed khaki pants. After bullshittin about what I can't remember, we drink wine, talk some more, drink, drink, drink.... I get up to go to the bathroom and when I return he has a note written out for me. It says, humbly and embarrassingly, that he can't control his bladder nor change himself after he poops up his diaper, so would I please change him? It seems like the service he is really asking for is affection. I say I would do it (in spite of feeling squeamish). What a load! We wrap it up (boy does it stink!) I hold my nose and since there is no garbage nor plastic bag in the room, dump it on the roof next to the hotel and shut the window. Then clean him off. His satchel is full of diapers. I take a towel, wet it, scrub him. According to his directions, powder him. His flesh is red. He begins playing with his cock, a long cock and asks if I mind if he tries to masturbate and I say no, not at all. It is the first time I see another man touching himself like that and with all the wine we'd drank, I am really diggin it. He stops masturbating, telling me how asexual he's been the past six months not even coming once and I can believe it, his cock looks like it has plenty stored in it. I fit his diaper and pin it up and walk into my room and go to sleep.

The entire week in S.F. I talk to practically no one, read sports page and eat french fries and malteds in McDonald's, carrying on my own personal Jewish rebellion. Take bus tour of the city and remember most vividly the view from the top of Twin Peaks. Other people there are tourists with Bermuda

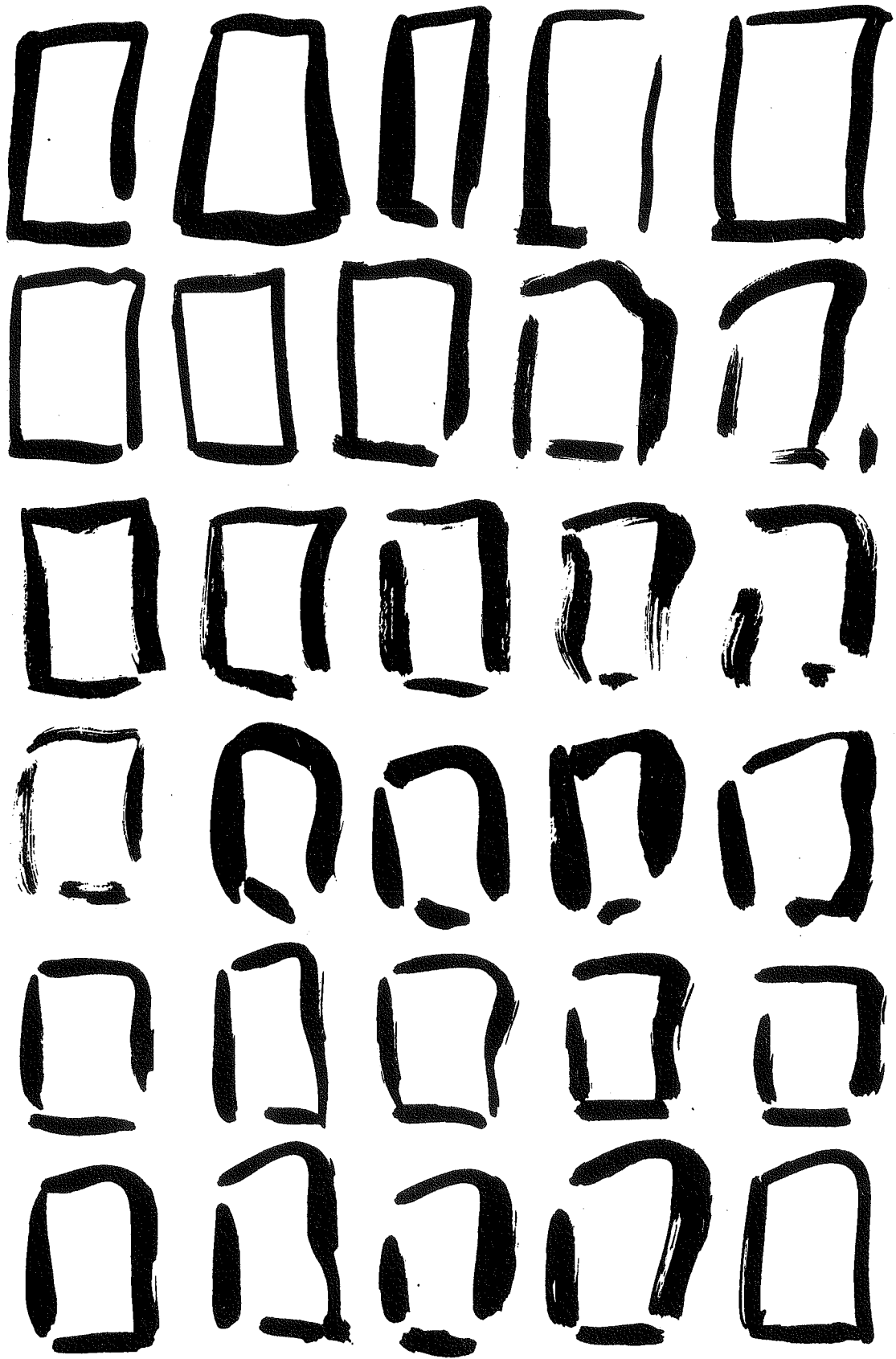
shorts and cameras over their shoulders; I am the only one there who reminds me of anyone I might be able to relate to. After the Saint Patrick Day parade I leave city, ride down hiway one with two ex-air force gunners who show me their Viet Nam scars, drive around turns above cliffs on two wheels saying, "We faced death every day--we're not afraid to die!" and I say I was never in the air force and could you please slow down. Instead of doing so, the guy not driving who is most scarred, teaches me to meditate which by his method is more like hypnosis, and I fade out for twenty minutes of total relaxation. Afterwards he turns me on to Jethro Kloss's vegetarian health habit book, Back to Eden, --and I need it, until this point I have never seen an avocodo, and drive me to the edge of midnight L.A., roll me a few "bombers," as he calls them, and sleep in an open field in some bushes some 30 yards off the road. Get stoned, nestle in a ditch for cover. Fall asleep. Next day w/business man cadillac past backaching migrant workers, to Nevada through Mojave desert where cops scare me and drug dealing driver who has just lit up a joint (pounds of it under the seat) and paranoid tells me to--quick!--swallow that joint, which I do, after putting it out of course. Cops don't pull us over which sort of disappoints me.

Upon arriving in Vegas, I go straight through the casino strips to the Salvation Army and go to sleep. A young woman with long black braids backs up off the barren interstate to give me a ride the following day and tells me stories--and satoris--of her youth on Indian reservation, in the back of her station wagon are chest plates and other beaded ceremonial garments the chief of her tribe commissioned her to string. Young man picks me up between two canyons and we head to Boulder via a night in Rifle, Colo where, in the wooden lobby of the old hotel, is a sign, "Town Doctor Wanted." I apply for the job but don't get it. Denver sleep in monastery with motherly monks with egg nest hairdos who serve hot tea, cider and chocolate reciting to all of us curled up on sofas and rugs, stories as it snows ephemerally as I, on the floor by an old oval window, rd an Arthur Dailey New York Times sports story and decide then to become a writer and cry emotionally and write my sister long letter telling her of this decision but never mail it.

Running out from under money, walking around Denver, lonely, aimless, unable or at least unwilling to speak, crossing the street is a major energy drain, sit in library filling out questionnaire about where I am from last and who am I that sits in daytime library, and I think how impossibly hard it would be to write books such as the ones I am readin. Wander down Broadway seeking work shovelin snow--manna!--but only a liquor store owner makes an offer, an offer of one dollar for a few hours work, I turn it down and soon it stops snowing. Leave Denver with \$17. Make it to Binghamton, N.Y., where my sister is living, with \$14. A traveling salesman picks me up in East Saint Louis after wild psylicibin sunset night-time trip through Kansas, smiling ear to ear all of it, and wanting someone to spend his money with, buys meals and allows me to crash in the back seat of his cadillac and shower in the holiday inn room he rents. After jumping into his car (he quizzed me first to see if I had any smarts) hands me aerosol deodorant spray can asks me to please use it. We drive endlessly and he tells me about his girlfriend in Terre Haute and private plane in Connecticut and how he doesn't give a shit whether he lives in Arizona or New York.

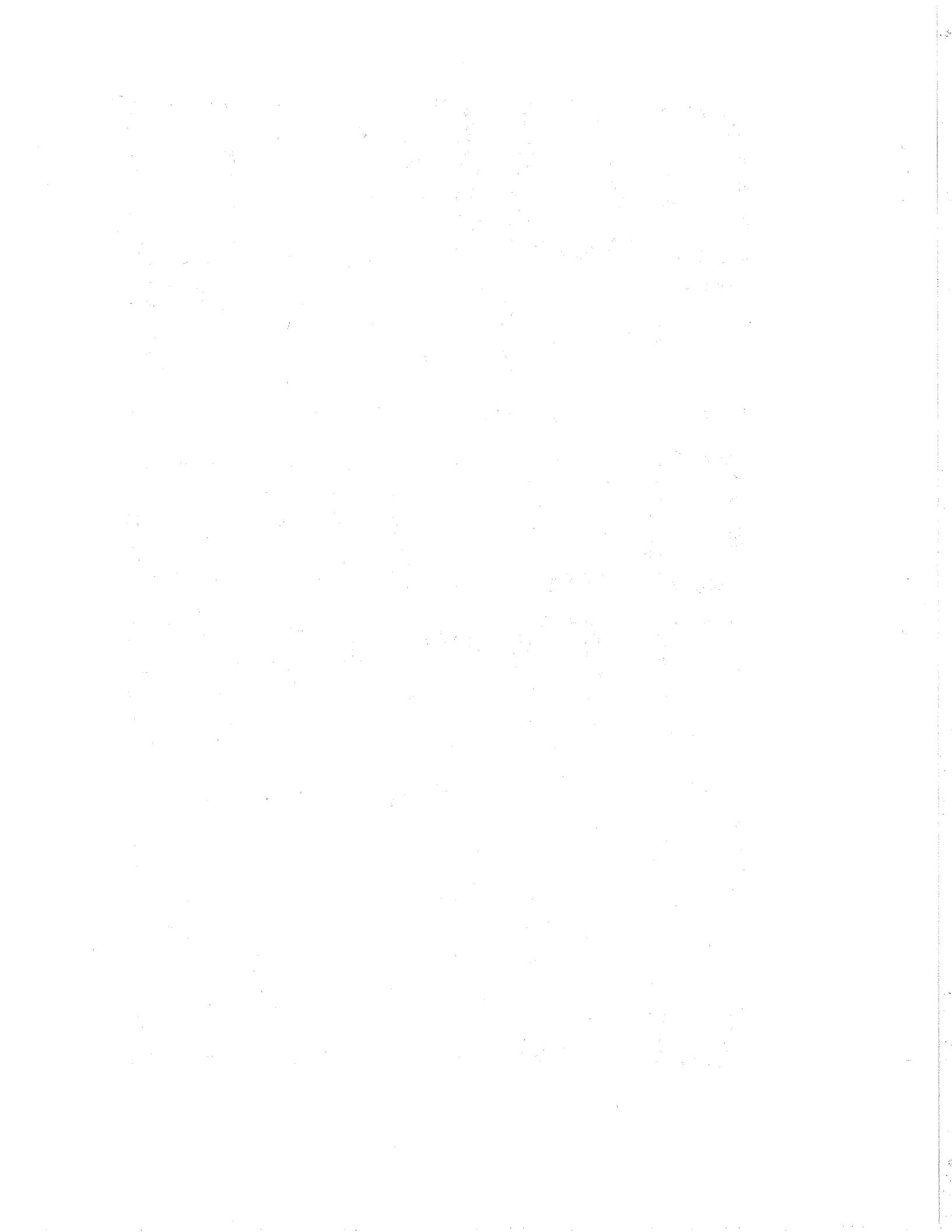
The night I make it to my sister's house she tells me she is a lesbian,

and I nearly black-out. The room becomes fuzzy, very fuzzy, everywhere except for a thin line of vision from my eyeballs to hers, a line of vision which remains very clear, as if scrubbed with ammonia. She speaks a little of the coming out process and that she wasn't sure if she should tell me or not, others have had bad experiences telling their immediate family who, after being told the news, become very un-immediate, but she wants to be close with me so therefore feels it necessary to divulge. I think I say thank you, I appreciate your telling me, it's alright, it's difficult seeing you in this way because I never looked at you as a lesbian before, but I would try, and my sister feels relieved and so do I. The room slowly moves back into place altho' the periphery of my vision is still a bit entranced. Sherry hands me a pipe and some grass and goes out to her consciousness raising group while I sit in a rocking chair by a window & get stoned....



30/viii/80

Finco Beltramelli



The Family Oldsmobile

big green shiny chrome fendered wonder of my imagination
with enough room to sleep on the dashboard in the back
the best seat in the house for a drive-in movie
I awoke during the shower scene in Psycho
& thought Janet Leigh looked remarkably like my mother
From here on in I'll be watchin you more closely Daddy
Watchin out for the woman I love

I AWOKE

I
awoke
in
the
early
morning
hours

began
to
write

returned

He
didn't
even
notice
I
was
gone

He
just
rolled
over
and
filled
up
the
bed

I
slept
one
foot
on
the
floor
so
as
not
to
wake
him

The Question

Her brother hounded
Silent nightclubs' piano circuits, pursued it
Wrote oriented numbers, owned a van

She sang like a ballplayer's retired uniform
I mean she learned a range
beyond the normal amble
Her hair was rich in sloping earth
like a deer's back
and thick and pure white

Early on, afraid of chaos
We covered one page with words
Shifting the letters in her name around
Urgently we lived together
And I went out west alone

Women she loved confused her,
Author of self's bliss, wanted their friendship
and eccentric caresses, creating art
Characters have breakdowns

It was the kind of family
that disagreed about method acting
while it snowed more
It's possible her mother
willed our violent separation

Easter Disentangled

The flower, the flower, intrinsic
Sheer irises unshedding salutary Heaven
Clean black seaweed

Something vindicated truly
Colossal glower
Instrument compelling barbers
Refined harbinger of cloth

You race caesarian calenders of humored facings
Bring complaints ecstasy
I detect your complacent incense
You lumber, unhearing, denote our posture

Spectacle from nowhere
No hates sworn, no lateness
No sacrificial lamplit compare
Your terrible seeking

Never postpone the sown countenance you effect
or I would be ruffled

The Veil

Clouds disappear
Rain pours on wood
The paneling is soaked

Across the Seine river
Houses look calm
We can take our bicycles

As usual
I wake up to a sky
Whose date I forget

My mind is king
Violinists make peace
Outside the window tickles me

Turquoise Blues

Why remember roseblue truck
Exposed cologne seeps in
Certainties like a concertina like a sponge
consciously extending counsel's whorehouses of milky-white
Heartbroken lentil

Delirious languish, dress subdued
Astonished, exemplary twenty-nine waist,
Suspenders, bedslide mat. Whim swarmed losenge
baked slime, tune & ponder binge divined.

She dashed around with a murderous broom
Incredulous to the fact in tomorrow's parading darkness
of Coney Island.
Moon pedants, a stage of hysterics.
To throw a colorless hat and duck
after a tumultuous week of rumors, what syncopation.
Field swaying apples, I respect you!

The cart, ether blue vermilion
Plants tolerance for my self-evident studies atop clouds.
Marble, cotton, Montana prairies, critical
Africa, letters falling flip in search.
Present disingenuous shattered proofs.

MY COFFEE

In a former life
I was a child...a rosy child impatient
with the world at large.

At tender three
I toddled to the window screaming
"That's enough!"

Mother drew the curtains closed,
sat me in a chair and said,
"Let me fix you a cup of coffee.
You're looking pale."

Ah, my coffee.
Some things have been left me after all.
My coffee.
Upwards of four dollars a pound but still
available
for the time being
and times being what they are
coffee is small comfort when snow poses on the ground
and Jackshit Frost spreads his chilling phlegm
across my windows.

My coffee.
I stopped putting three teaspoons of sugar in it because
that
was killing me.

(to myself) So why the long face?
Why so glum?

(to myself) Shut up!
Can't you see you drive me crazy?
Everything you say sounds like whale songs
but what
does it matter?
I've got

My coffee
and a cigarette, I still take cream
when I can get it and
I'm partial to Kent 100's though
any smoke will do in a pinch, a pinch
being when I'm out of Kents, but tea doesn't work
as a stand-in for coffee.

I have to get ready for tea.
I have to be into feeling healthy
or sick to really enjoy tea.
When I feel ill, it's great to sip on steaming
minty herbal tea with lemon and honey.
I like the way it fills my throat with soothing heat,
the soreness shies away with each swallow and down
in the tummy, muscles relax.

Without tea
I could hardly continue smoking
when I've got a cold.

Sometimes I'd like to give up coffee, pasty skin
cigarettes and just be healthy.
But I can't imagine impatience
without addiction.

I'd be a nervous tomato
leaking my juice all in the paper bag until I fell through
and splattered on the concrete.
Then I'd need a cup of tea for sure,
two or three probably, along with stronger
medicine.

Oh, did I tell you?
I met a woman who thought the New York poor
more ill-mannered than London poor?

Yes.
It was at a party where Disco bleated all night long,
a house with few books,
a house with swimming pool, tennis courts, speakers on all
five levels, pool table in a room
with authentic shoeshine chairs on marble steps,
red-velvet shoeshine chairs,
artifacts of slavery reconstruction.
I was hired to keep the food out
and the ashtrays clean.
We were in the kitchen.
She was making a milkshake and I was drinking
my coffee.

I wanted to sit her down and explain
"That's enough!"
I wanted to sew her eyelids open and tour her down Avenue D,
but
as she licked the chocolate off the spoon I thought,
"Oh well. Someday this will all be
a former life, and who am I to talk,
me, singer of whale songs..."

I lit a cigarette and sipped
my coffee.
My reflection
in the windowglass
was ghostly.

My Summer Vacation

In Chicago, in the world's largest aquarium,
 a fish with oddly human teeth
 nuzzles the glass as if to say
 "Give Uncle Mel a kiss" or
 "There are certain secrets I have to relay,"
 and there is a feeling in the room.
 The Moray eels float in their tank like sleeves.
 I stare at them so long
 I go bald in the reflection
 that makes me stand among them.
 What funny mouths they have, like a teacher's!
 In the 18th century everyone had
 George Washington's mouth; now everyone has
 Jane Fonda's, full-lipped but stern.
 And in New York, in Grand Central Station,
 how embarrassing to see grouper on the menu.
 Two floors below the trains arriving
 can anyone eat grouper, so big and friendly?
 The restaurant has no tables.
 They just lay the fish in your lap
 along with a fork and some salt.
 Today, the paper says, Jean Stafford died
 and Vivian Vance died yesterday.
 This always happens on vacation.
 One summer it was Groucho and Elvis,
 and when Ezra Pound died, and Robert Lowell,
 they put it on page 28, that's that.
 To see the Philharmonic free
 we cross to Staten Island
 on the good ship Verrazano.
 The park is called Snug Harbor,
 a former home for retired seamen,
 and we nearly miss the last ferry back
 (oh, deepening symbolism). Next day,
 at the Metropolitan, we are pleased to see
 their two good paintings, Weasels at Play
 and Red-Headed Woman in the Garden of Mssr. Forest.
 Montreal, we find, is like Milwaukee.
 They have pinball machines
 that give you your money's worth (5 balls)
 but no excitement whatever. But the food is good
 and I speak a little French: "Oui, oui, bleu, bleu"
 and hear a Canadian joke on English TV:
 "A bachelor without ketchup is like
 a doctor without golf clubs."

And when it's later in Pennsylvania, father at 62
has never eaten shrimp, and grandmother has forgotten
what to call a clarinet.

I say less and less. We sit there aging,
watching the one grandchild
walk from room to room with her toys.

Here I learn two things of poetic interest:
the piece of wood they used for carrying
two buckets of water
was called a "gathering yoke,"
and grandmother says when she was a child,
unable to sleep before a trip,
her mother called it "journey proud."

Warm chinook wind in mid-February
Soon it will be time to plant the garden
First early radishes then zucchini
Corn must wait til late April
Moe will tend the tomatoes
I don't like them and the plants know it
Summer squash planted in May
And if I time it right
Two crops of lettuce
But here it is just past mid-winter
One warm day and I dream of fresh vegetables
How the mind plays games
To harvest a garden
Before I hang up my snow shovel

At Apollinaire's

At Apollinaire's grave
in Pere Lachaise
I don't know why
I start to cry
an absurd thought
that if Guillaume had lived
everything would be different
the course of modern art would have been refreshing
Picasso never could have
deserted his friends
cameraderie would not have foundered
if Guillaume had been around.
If you had hung around, Guillaume
I'd be talking to you
instead of standing on your head
muttering at your gravestone
and the Lower East Side would long ago
have been declared a national monument
all the poets would be millionaires
bankers would form the ranks
of the true avant-garde
poverty would be solved by thinking about it
and I wouldn't have to hurry up
to finish this joint I am smoking
hurry up, Guillaume, at your grave
because five Japanese tourists
enter on the scene
at this narrow walkway's end
crowded with gravestones
and I get paranoid
and hurry up, I'm always having to hurry
while you're in no such rush, Guillaume
you've got ice ages to kill
as you sit there up to your eyebrows
in one of the many alleyways
connecting the great avenues
of the dead at Pere Lachaise. Curious, though...
I notice you're facing forever the sculptor Riguidel Blondet's head
I hope you two have something to say to each other!
What if he's a bore, Guillaume; I mean
who is Riguidel Blondet, anyway? What a funny name!
With your luck, he's probably
advancing his position in a sculptor's pecking order
with a lot of hot air
that you have to listen to for all eternity.

What a shame! But, on the other hand,
I see that you're buried in the arms of your wife, Jacqueline
(I hope at least that worked out well)
and I also see that the calligrammes
carved in your granite stomach
make of this place a poet's grave
that Japanese tourists are barging right into
six days before your hundredth birthday.
They're turning off the bustling boulevard of death
and approaching us, Guillaume, I can't believe it
they're going to interrupt us, what creeps!
Don't they know I'm a poet
trying to talk to you
long enough to let you know
that everything is different since you kicked off.
It's a lot worse now, believe me.
After all, you left on Armistice Day, 1918, Guillaume!
So much has changed!
Picasso is dead
after living a million years longer than you
and flooding the world with his boring paintings
and the poets are in trouble, Guillaume
nobody reads them but their friends
publishing is controlled by dog food distributors
and all the kids in the world
are growing up, as far as, to read,
by and large, they could care less, Guillaume,
and the Japanese tourists will soon return like pinballs
to their rows of record-breaking machines.
They were too unnerved by my presence
hunched over your grave
open notebook on my knee
to aim their cameras at us
as they normally would have done.
Instead, this time
they returned home with a blank slide
and a few minutes' worth
of static on their headsets
in August of 1980
at Apollinaire's

Love Hurts

1. Dumb breezes that my mouth
can't resist from talking about
Newspapers, cameras, beds
are walking around, making noise in my head
Water tall maidens drink
up in my brain, making me think

The little silver hammer and the little red bell,
Bill and his brother, I know them well;
A kick in the groin from under a skirt,

love hurts.
Love hurts!
Love hurts!
Love hurts!

2. Brilliant blue brown eyes
Fourteen girls out of fifteen tries
The wet lips under the nose
lengthen and shorten, bite themselves close
Wonderful dreams memory makes;
All things can come with visual aids!

Some have got looks, some've got charm
& some have got a bankroll that's as big as your arm
Some work you over & some just work,

love hurts.
Love Hurts!
Love Hurts!
Love hurts!

(Outside in your room, a mile from land
nothing can save you but what's in your hand
& things in your head that make your fingers jerk
won't hurt!)

3. Big if, no idea!

Whose idea was it to have no ideas?

Small brains under the arm

are racing and pacing and doing me harm!

Formerly friendly nerves attack

the thought of spending the night on my back

A thousand sorrows of hairless flesh,
a thousand diseases so easy to catch,
one time in a million when everything works,

love hurts.

Love hurts!

Love hurts!

Love hurts!

Love hurts!

LOVE HURTS!

(c) 1978 Tom Carey, Mark Breeding

Motherhood (Adapted from a poem by Frank O'Hara)

--For James Schuyler

1. There I could never be a boy,
Though I could ride like a god when my horse was scared
At a cry from mother, I fell to my knees;
I loved her fright--It was all over me.
And I followed her perfume in the air
Though I rode like a god
on a frightened mare

2. The random fears of a scarlet soul
As it breathes in and out and nothing breaks or chokes
All things were tragic when my mother watched;
my forehead alive and smarting with thoughts
And all her dreams seemed to die in hope
As boyhood died
with a cry from her throat

CHORUS: Motherhood makes men!
Mothers always win in the end!
Motherhood makes men!
Mothers always win in the end!

3. I had a quick heart; it never threw me
for in the billowing air I was fleet and bright
I could not be a boy--I gracefully understood,
and there I fell, clumsy and sick and good
What had been given to me was fast and light;
Riding blackly towards men
in the ethereal night

And as the miles streak by all of us
I find that I have been given enough
speed and strength to remain
feminine, marvelous, and tough.

CHORUS: Motherhood makes men!
Mothers always win in the end!
....etc.

--Tom Carey 1980
Frank O'Hara 1957

Saint Sophia

1. At this hour and date
I do not feel so great
In this time of need
Unwelcome visitors sprout like weeds
On a farm, when there's trouble
You can fix it with a shovel
You can run to a field
of grass

But I cannot escape the men
Oh, look out! They're approaching again
My name is Sophia and I am only five years old

2. Gee, it's getting late
I should not be awake
I should be undressed
A growing girl must have her rest
C'mon Ma, put me to bed
And if I wake up dead
Take me to a field
of grass

'Cos I cannot understand these lights
The unholy visions, the ghosts in the night
My name is Sophia and I am only five years old

CHORUS: (Sophia, Sophia!)
My name is Sophia
(Sophia, Sophia!)
Saint Sophia
(Sophia, Sophia!)
I am only five years old!

3. In this time of need
I'd like some books to read
Oh, here they are are again!
Unwelcome visitors in the shape of men!
C'mon boys, leave me alone
Don't take me from my home
Go on out to a field
of grass

'Cos I cannot escape the jaws
of the porcelain tiger with the painted claws
My name is Sophia and I am only five years old

CHORUS: (Sophia, Sophia!)
My name is Sophia
(Sophia, Sophia!)
Saint Sophia
(Sophia, Sophia!)
I am only five years old!

(c) 1979 Tom Carey, Mark Breeding

Lamb's Club

Most of what little she weighed was alcohol.
The rest was barbiturates.
It was the kind of day that made you think twice
about ever opening your eyes again.
Thus began my unsold mystery novel.
The writing of which became a little murder in itself.
A recurring dream of being lost in a forest of literal book trees.
Spruce-like monsters dropping pages in the autumn breeze.
When I sleep fitfully I begin to see a subtle connection
between a person's foot size and the relative bounce and body
of their hair.
This wrecked havoc with my mystery novel's logical underpinnings.
My better half began the day avoiding the cigarettes
that my unharmonious half eventually succumbed to.
It was during this pivotal time that I met a woman
who believed in God and belonged to the Lamb's Club.
She had the strangest blitzed eyes.
Appearing blasted on alcohol and barbiturates.
If shipwrecked I'd expect her to send a message in a six-pack.
Unfortunately, we were both landlocked in the same neighborhood
and sent our messages in a phonebooth.
Sometimes, when you grow close to someone
they rub off on your writing.
So I called it Lamb's Club and it was barely $\frac{1}{2}$ page long.

A SUPERMARKET HISTORY

to institute
the theory of
divide & conquer
maintain division & rule
the founders
of the slavery
invented
the languages
which they spread among the peoples
slowly
until they could no longer
understand one another

to further this
they divided the sexes
training
the females of the species
to be subservient
& at the same time
mystifying them with the power
to allure
the stronger male
so that
when not preoccupied
with the network of wage slavery
often
on warm boulevards
& summer nights
one can see
the female
with its ass raised
walking
followed
by the agitated male
nose pursuing
carefully
the accentuated
delicate buttocks
& legs

the state of war
also was
an essential element
in the frame
of the yoke
because the animals

given their high intelligence
became dangerous
as their numbers grew
swelling the awareness
that they shovel shit
while someone else eats ice cream

consequently
nations formed & adhered
to systems
& religions
& there were endless wars
holy wars
& later
economic systems became so complicated
as to
be religions

by that time
the rumor that most of the inhabitants of the planet
live in slavery
had become widely believed
& economic systems
proposing liberation arose

but the ruling structure
responded to the ensuing wars
with far sighted manipulation
to further their hold

imagine
a secret congress
behind the congress of vienna
say
planning a new century of warfare
while consolidating slave nations
to supply cheap goods
to the bourgeois states
already erected upon
all history's previous plunder
& dedicating hidden energies
to the subversion & co-option
of the inevitable successful revolutions
to yield
cheap labor states
sold out
& ready to be used

these are just some simple thoughts
I had
in the supermarket today
July 21st

in the twilight
as outside the sun was setting
& I almost bought my yogurt
with a pill
instead of a bill

but correcting myself
made my way home thinking that
a key
to the dilemma
is still
communication

for in the course
of all the wars
technological advances
in weapons
led
to the development
of a technology
that could create
such unimaginable abundance
that slavery
would no longer be
necessary
for the physical
gratification
of any material needs

these days
many channels are open
& if they close
there will be new ones
but they will be difficult
& we can still use
the ones
that recently
came upon us

Ya talk into here
like this

Prisoner In An Otis

On an elevator with faces I recognize
As strangers to each other,
Acquaintances of mine from diverse activities
(Poetry, softball, bed, talking books)
We don't go up or down as usual,
Which is what I like most,
Ordinary life enhanced by an art
That doesn't exploit the dread
Of mutilation and death that seems
To inevitably accompany consciousness.

In the front room drinking wine, reading
About the Alps, trading laps please me also,
But this eccentric spacecraft zooms from its shaft
Like a flea-flicker pass, opens to
A split-level room with art gallery furniture,
Leather and chrome, crowded with people
Tied and gowned, drinking martinis,
Tearing the air.

I don't want to get back on
But must go to work (baling hay?)
And can't think of any other way
To get out of this party.
Only the elevator zooms again
Somewhere else, panicking me further
Though now you're in it too.

I can't shake the small town I haul around.
If I could find solid ground to park this contraption
Everybody in it could talk to each other,
Instead of biding grimly the time
Before the door slides finally open.

A solid nimbostratus cover promises water.
Stepping from the shower I whistle
Like a factory worker just off the shift.

Epithalamion

One tugboat low in the water tows, almost still
In the opposing river, 4 Lone Star Industries
Barges toward Albany. 8 to a tow rope
I've seen float downriver. Closer to shore
2 sails, like gulls, wobble strenuously.

A colt with gray hairs snorts the briny air.
Yesterday, listening to Bach's violin partitas,
You, sewing sofa covers, assured me, turning
The record over, we'd continue groping as we grow older
For responses to needs that vary moment to moment.

SIMON SCHUCHAT

COMMONISM

That lunging gun guitar we grew up with
Meant armed love, meant turn
It upside & watch it grow, meant let
Burst the shell of the old
So I grew up, you did, scattered
Do we continue to mean the same?
The quality of periodic light in Shanghai
Is never what I expected, is music
Banned, is there what on the horizon
And is there some need to spout Soviet
Propaganda? Was there solid research
And consciousness raised in mockery
Was it better than fucking, better than
Art? O era, you had characteristics
To lie that set of pretty covers and words
In each place more like each other
Before, you are watching that light
Glint red on buildings as it did in Chicago
Eight years and thirteen stories higher
O bliss it was in that to be very dawn
Despite to work for three fen a day
I affirm some implausible beauty, violence aside
We are in fact all the same and this
Makes hopeful our identical future
I still can see living in the residue

TO A FARMER

Behind a butterfly, behind a buffalo
Better than life in a watch factory
Under the mountains and through the trees
Beneath white heavens and on the gray hill

The water bubbles in pineapple red runnels
It is your wife knitting in the cotton patch
Your daughter washing your gumboots in the runnels
Have you eaten yet and where are you going

Row by row
The water bubbles
It is your wife
Your daughter
Have you eaten yet
and where are you going

TO THE AMERICAN ARMY

Perhaps they are not such bad people after all
With their green marrow and hide
Therefore it is meet we now them unloose
Thus is it fit time to bite the bone holder
Coughing with resolution and unleash
Bravura hordes of irreconcilable contradictions
And smash their array with a faintly sore throat
If you recall our internal conduct
You will regret the oil belongs to them
Nonetheless the mercy of the Empire is
Witless on the green baize of some club
It is well to know we fight for sex and drugs
Finally against the work ethic and in favor
Of all the labor-saving devices
A hungry dumpling of a world could want

Fellow citizens! The strange ones
Abhor your musicks and term them rot
And their responsables deplore freedom
For those less able to deal with it correctly
And our slandering of public officials is unspeakable

POEM

I

Brass boots pounding out of the cave
Love's not much of a wall against the coming war
We have exercised and matured in the great waves
Stayed close to our hearts and wept bravely
We are nothing and nothing will help us

Lord, it is beginning another round
Spinning beyond this charm and that dance
I am not an old man even in my chair
And I have no business in the drifting world
Compelling me to brave the river on foot

If you are to pull the cord the fruit drops
The air falls down and buildings quiver
A Navy to the south, an Army in the north
The vain, the sword, the bow, directions
That raise up their witty arms and beg

II

A corona of fog protects us as we cross
This world becomes bleakly wondrous
As if the modest orchard were dropping truth
Its teeth being round, dark, wet
Stories it has told us turning taller
And making you and I the only citizens
Because it is sleep compelling me to brave
The white road open to the front
Presenting space politics in humility

There is no new direction, repetition
Fervor and heat, newly grown and celebrating
Beckoning and this us that cleared a meadow
Know that meadow overgrown with big business
Now dwarfing, kicking, affording us tropics
And I sit distant on from my self on my ledge
Dizzy and nauseous from coffee and worry and news

WIND IN THE RIGGING

The sound that moves the day along starts with the samba of your heart. After awhile its beat turns into a stream of running water. You find yourself on a boat in the middle of a river and hear clothes being washed along the banks. Today is your imagination's laundry day. Yesterday was laundry day too.

All of a sudden you hear an organ that starts as if it's always been there. It continues along with the samba, the river, and the scrubbing on the banks, as continuously as the music in an amusement park. Just when you think the ferris wheel will never stop, the organ leaves off. Then, more organ music from nowhere returns. The only difference between beginning and beginning again is that the day is now a little farther along.

You might think time amounts to getting on and off a ferris wheel, but what you've really got is an all day pass; you don't get time off. Whenever the organ starts up again it pushes the day along a little more; the seat you're in goes a little higher. From the very top you can see yourself on a boat in the running water, and you can see the last dream of salad days being scrubbed free along the banks. All day long it seems like a new song might be starting, and that's what moves the day along.

WANDERING SCHOLARS

some such sum or sun
 something similar like what we seek
 when in poorer dresses left behind
 like the profligate trees even kinder to the poor
 though they have to pay with their cars
 we cast out on this rigid trip to live in the city
 again as once when our arms when we walked were more free

a generation later the water power or pressure
 stops as it often did then, a child or children look
 and you fear from being tied they will fall
 in the moat at the zoo where the swans swim in
 shallow white water painted blue, a whistle takes place
 and in the corridors behind the big house bottles break
 it is a symphony of what is liked to be being done by
 someone around here, maybe many more, this anachronistic place

that wasn't memory dear derogated word of inexacting
 limits to the cheerful or awful as you like it often as good
 as Twelfth Night then as bad, which baby cries, as any of the tragedies

xeroxing is as available as the recurring disco radio,
 both act as a mind to reproduce the weary torsos of the poems
 and of the discoettes not always punk some more so than
 the woman with partly purple hair on the bus with her mother,
 what ineluctable public education was the kindly mother getting
 while the cared-for toes of the other travellers signalled some
 form of custom the battered feet of the meter opposite had ignored

it's a little too complicated to go into if you don't feel free
 or have the energy to raise the roof of the rented rooms
 the poetry seems written like the yardage on the fabric of a curtain --
 if you chose to leave it out without a handsewn hem you might wind up
 craving a character in error like the volunteering clowns in the park
 who wish to be discovered but only embarrass the children
 with their overwrought ambitions to Shakespearean memories of
 light like the lights of a new set of rooms, one too
 bright one too yellow one a depressing fluorescent to cook under
 all the foods of Naples Florence the Ukraine Lithuania & Warsaw
 mixed together in a kind of sleep soup which expects the dream of all
 the clownish moving to be recurring because a symptom of the reason
 of our east coastern civilization where the housing is uncertain
 of its normal claims for shelter and to provide water
 & light like the light of any light under which or by we might

write poetry not only makes us silly though we crave a formidable exemption
but makes for silly poetry like the addled unhomogenized dinner I
made you my friends my guests whom and the free rooms
of all the parts of the city I had studied like poetry's history
I loved and returned to. I left a perfectly good piece of equipment
behind under a bush. But I got away so what does it matter?
Let it go, I can find another one equally good here.

ADULT DIAPERS

Frank O'Hara lived on ninth street where we pass
his building all the time so what however I lived
on that block too I'm afraid I am getting hayfever
nobody knows how strange it might be unless I express it
in poetry to be being back here in nueva york now
I have to go get a tissue...oh now I'm back
I didnt get a tissue because they cost 89¢ a box in NY,
I got some toilet paper instead which I guess we can still afford
if we can remember to buy it at the market where the tooth paste
is behind bars in case anybody wants to steal the baby shampoo
which costs three times more than it did before we got here,
this isnt exactly a poem is it a journal? in New Hampshire
there was no state income tax, those people felt they had it made
in that sense but, you know, maybe they did because the beer
was alot cheaper and so was the wine but you couldnt get whiskey
unless, remember I explained all that to you before?
and god forbid you wanted any drugs you'd get arrested right away,
like two of my students though there was alot of drugs around
one of them even drove a jeep so you'd think in New Hampshire
they'd leave their own kind alone and our psychedelic babysitter
sold her mushrooms out of our refrigerator & she didnt get arrested
but her boyfriend Slim did for stealing a violin & we might for not
paying our oil bill left derelict, oil's not cheap, now I'm even being boring
You New Yorkers wouldnt believe what you have to pay for oil
to heat a space as I heard another mother in Central Park call what
her child was, she felt, impinging on as belonging to our kid
in front of a cage of rabbits & raccoons we had gone to see to
make us feel once in New Hampshire I was out for my nighttime walk
and a long & skinny skunk who looked like a fur stole like the
garment worn by matrons in ancient Rome came up to me gregariously
as I heard is the animal's wont & then went to take a drink
from a small pool of water Bob & Shelley had given us in Lenox
for the children to swim or splash in. I must admit when someone says
to me poetry is not this or that I'm tempted then to imitate Joe Brainard
though I dont mean to insult him with a verisimilitude of mine
that he might have no faith in but what a fine expositor as a poet he is
and poet as that so as to explicate or help what is that
so you & I will know & have some foundation for poorly performing
erudition in the future so we can defend ourselves though I dont know
from what, now what was I saying?
What's the matter with being a poet anyway, there's little purpose
to talking about blood and semen though I cant cease to talk about
No! I wont say it, I wont tell you, I'll only mention that the stamps
the babysitter from the college in New Hampshire sent from the
Lisbon Sheraton in Portugal when she was supposed to be at the Rainbow gathering

in West Virginia became part of what you call a collage Marie made when everybody got diarrhea, as if New York isn't binding she gives us pleasure by incorporating everything without remorse into a work if only we will let her use the scotch tape even the magic blue plastic prophylactic containers I said to him I'd been feeling o.k. considering all this but that last night I was freaking out because in my rage I couldn't sleep not to mention the Greek-- we don't know if it's a comedy or a tragedy yet--it's very complicated all that goes on among the family..

(something I can't say here)

& who knows what poetry is, everybody in the summer seems to wonder about it, in the winter I feel we are all more sure:

What a plague is knowledge of anything in the morning &

what a comfort it becomes in the night, otherwise

what would all the hours of the day become like the Egyptian God who spent an hour in each hour of the day on a boat with a scribe recording everything, well we don't have him around these days, in fact we fear for our vocal chords, a structure like a tendon or a charcoal brazier which reminds me I am a principle member for remembering in a rigid framework like memory & as of a bridge everything otherwise we're all done for

I'm sorry you'll just have to listen to me

like my dear old fat aunt Madeleine Mayer whose real name was Magdalena for all my personal faults & possible penchant for evil,

my ignoring that packages of books must be wrapped & in accordance with the regulations of the post office, not with unkempt strings

& looser tapes but with some other perfect stuff I don't know the nature of,

besides that I might ruin myself worrying about it but who cares

you & I only hope each of us remains & arrives like a good parent

at old age intact or to its destination without too much whatever it is

that no human being can bear however then when we go out in the morning

or in the afternoon we see everybody else more or less still walking

back & forth as if nothing ever happened doing whatever it is each does

so I guess I better be quiet & hope, hope what? you tell me,

I'm sick of all this shit, being hideously phony & always raising up love at the end of every answering love poem.

The Reckless Sleeper

Artemidorus in medias res

A dream in which a butterfly crashes through a stone wall is a warning that you are not immune to flattery.

To see pianos explode in your dreams is to know that the gods want to comfort you.

A dream of severe cold that makes the clocks slow down but not altogether freeze means that you will soon receive gifts from people you detest.

A tin bird with square feathers that flies in and out of a dream should leave you wary of new affections, of those who love wine and abhor the daylight.

To be told that you often cackle loudly in your sleep indicates that you are not a master of indifference.

To see yourself asleep in a dream is more than a disappointment; it means you are a bore.

A dream in which you stumble through a brilliant desolation with your arms full of treasure too heavy to carry begins a tale of joy if you are quack, a tale of ruin if you are not.

To dream of a rotten cactus signifies that you have somehow offended the dead.

The sight of any major appliance in a dream is usually a blessing, but could also mean that you will soon fall victim to a beautiful deception.

To receive an invitation in a dream is the mark of the intelligent dreamer.

Short dreams are the dear price of a hectic life; long dreams are the compensation for a dull one.

To dream that you are taller than usual indicates that you are not very healthy and may soon be attacked.

Following a dream in which someone empties a pipe by tapping it on your head, get out of bed and run, flee your house, your village, never to return again.

A calamity is foretold by any dream of plane crashes, collisions at sea, greasy windows, or gum wrappers.

Lush landscapes and tropical sunsets are strong indications that you will embarrass yourself forever.

A friend who menaces your well-being in a dream should be struck forcefully the next time you meet.

A dream of departure may well indicate that you will be going on a journey.

If you dream of a bush moving in the midst of many still ones, then expect someone to confide something to you that only a fool will divulge.

A dream of swallows drowned in honey is also a lucky dream --if you are a craftsman, but an uneventful dream for professionals.

If the devil plays the violin to you in a dream, then you will accomplish heroic goals, achieve your highest aspirations and fiercest desires, yet retain a confusing amount of humility.

If you recall in a dream that the male duckbill platypus is the only poisonous mammal in the world, this indicates that you are a lover of biology but that you are also quite naive.

If an anonymous Malay pursues you through the throbbing sunlight of countless lifetimes, this dream signifies that you are under extreme emotional stress and are taking the wrong medicine.

A dream of eating uncooked corn does not easily lend itself to interpretation.

If you experience an ecstatic sexual encounter in a dream where naked people are chasing wildlife through crowded restaurants, then ignore it, for this is not an important dream.

To dream that you laugh while a pack of lies chases you through a dark forest means that you are destined to live without faith or bitterness, a vagrant, a lover of change, yet unable to explain what makes you laugh.

If a talking bear visits you in a dream, listen closely. He is there to dispel secrets and deflate exaggerations. But he will refuse any request.

Nudity is a sign of laziness and abundant rewards.

When the music in a dream is very dramatic and the dialogue barely audible, then you should donate everything you own to the poor. However, when the dialogue is loud and the music almost inaudible, then give away everything you own to the rich.

When a Weeping Beech appears in a dream with its branches drooping to the ground, this signifies that you have grown morose and self-indulgent. If, soon afterwards, you see a Banyan tree in a dream, then be warned that you are on the verge of becoming a happy imbecile.

A dream of a damp world where people live forever and violently shake dwarfs out of trees for amusement, should not be rejected immediately. For though it is a foe of sympathy it is also a source of magic.

To dream that your watch releases a bubble with every hour signifies that the gods of apology plan to make you crawl into knots like a snake in the dust.

A dream in which you are writing alone at a table and using a raw steak as a blotter is a sign of hope for the pedant but meaningless to the unemployed or diseased.

A dream which depicts lambs jumping over rainbows in flowery meadows should be abandoned at once, for this is where the songs of fiends arise.

Do not scoff at a dream in which a reasonable man urinates on his lawnmower.

A dream in which the initiates to an honorable legion must carry tankards that hold a gallon of wine and drain them while running barefoot over hot sand, then stand on their heads and recite a ridiculous hymn, is simply another reminder that quos vultet perdere Jupiter dementet.

Anna

She remembers the red trim of her brother's
 military jacket and how the neighbors
 came round to see him in it
 On a piece of land off the main road, canals running
 each side, horses pulling
 the loads, white flax to make linen
 and grains
 half an acre leased from a Polish aristocrat
 in town two miles away
 At Chanukah, there'd be plenty of geese to eat

On Friday nights, wintertime, the peasants would come from
 the city by horse and sleigh in the high snow. They would
 pass our house. We had the shutters closed but they would
 see a little light inside. Friday, when we were having
 dinner, that was a holy night, but the peasants would stop
 anyway and knock at our door calling, "Let us in, we're
 dying" and my father would say, "Go to the devil!" He
 would never open the door because we were afraid. The
 peasants were drunk...In the daytime, on the way to the city,
 they would stop to sell live chickens, eggs or a calf.

she remembers, in that gas-lit century
 her sister cleaning a lamp
 with a glass chimney
 the fire for it, a hanging lamp

and the way the family escaped Hitler cause
 her brother, after bringing a shipment of flax
 the 50 miles to the nearest railroad station and
 receiving payment, instead of returning home
 hopped on board a different train sending
 his peasant assistant back with the message:
 "Ivan, go home, tell Papa that I'm going
 over the border to America and I'll try to
 communicate with him as soon as I get across
 the border." 20 year old Philip, going
 through Litva to Riga to leave Russia -
 Papa going "Where's the money?" but
 the money has gone with an immigrant
 now on a boat, sailing away from the old country

so years later, when the comfort of Russia
 became threatened, the pregnant sister
 and her new husband boarded a ship, also, to follow

The people on the boat told us that you must have fifty dollars to land in America. I was dying for an orange but I wouldn't break the fifty dollars.

Finding no one, in spite of a telegram sent, at Ellis Island to meet them, get on another boat, more water the ferry across the Hudson River to New Jersey, May, 1910

We took a cab to go to Philip's house. I couldn't remember if he lived on Wallington Street or Garfield Street. So I asked the driver in Polish - he looked Polish, an old-timer, to take us to Garfield Street or Wallington Street. He took us to Market Street and comes to a Jewish restaurant. It was a delicatessen. The people looked at us. Harry was presentable, he was handsome. The owner walked over to us. He says, "Sprechen sie Deutsch? or Sprechen sie Yiddish?" So I says, "Yeah, yeah. Do you know my brother Philip?" He says, "Of course I know your brother Philip. He lives on Wallington Street."

So we went. They knew we were coming but they didn't know when. So when we walked into the butcher shop and grocery it was filled with customers. I walked in with the belly wearing a long dress. I didn't know what to wear. I was wearing a beautiful colored long dress with a beautiful rose felt hat. Philip was out. Abe was in the store and Clara was in the store. When I walked in and they see the way I walked in they see a creature! So Abe says, "Anna!" and he ran over to me. Philip wasn't there yet. He was supposed to come in from a route so before he came they hid me. Philip didn't know me altogether. When he left Russia, I was about 4 years old. So he walked in and I walk up and he looks at me and he says, "You're Anna?" I says "Yeah". He picked me up - with my belly - and he starts dancing with me and the customers are watching and everybody starts crying.

(with thanks to Suzanne Nacht from whose oral history of Anna Goldberg the quotes of this poem are taken)

WARMTH OF NIGHT, HEAT

warmth of night, heat
of day, cool breeze that
jets through & ruffles

seaward tides, the ships
upon which dance, tankers
at anchor beneath the narrows

in dark straits, on the water
the air is sheets of hunger
hanging on the heat

of a marvelous love, that
& you unsettle me enough
to sing a fever,

fan on & still I sweat,
running a pencil down
a blank page, a song forms

foaming with darkness, cloaked
in it's vague cool the poem grows
as this night goes, warmth of day

hacks its way in, sticks to
the clothes we're not wearing,
but touches the body I hunger for

to run a finger down you, putting
a palm on your restive shape, before
a mouth crashlands, doing a few stunts

blue as night pinched white, crazy
from the heat & tender the flesh
gets air to, venting sweat sweet

as a neck so tan I quiver slightly
even as The Police quiver, delivering
a red reggae that'll pulse rag clouds

in rocky babylon, a wet velvet screen
your eyes are so blue against, so
passionate & moist under rain

my arms hope to catch one drop
of your juices at that vein
on your shoulder that's red

& blue as the night sky, tilted back
between your legs I sniff another wetness,
burning my senses a brilliant tattoo

on an eyelid, snowflakes in July, cannon
fire over the battery, dark puffs
of liquid indigo, birthstone colors

and the blood I wash my face & hands in
drying myself beneath twenty-three breaths
ships slip out into the blue vastness

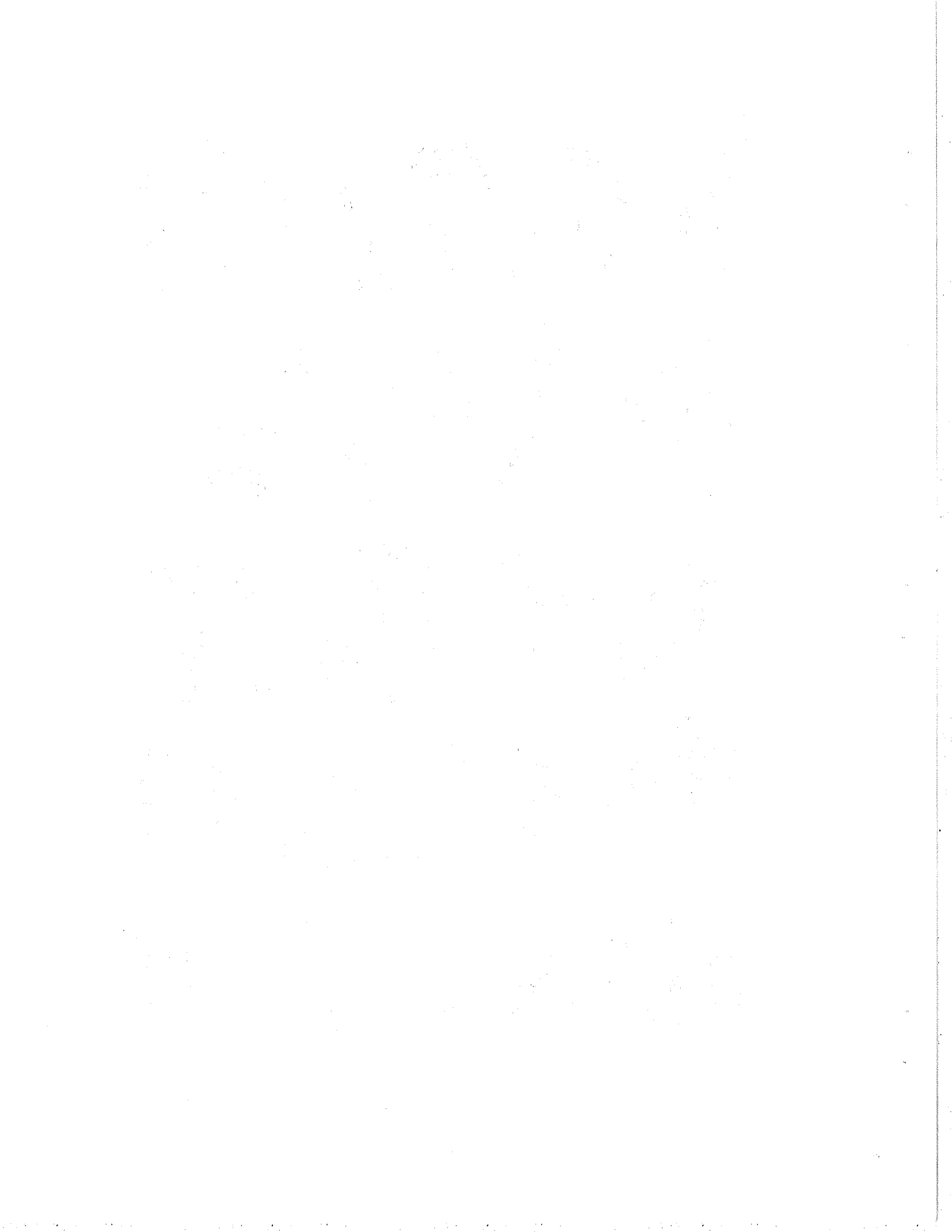
as we slip out of our bodies, my great love
grows quiet as the lapping sea, our love's
enough traffic for one ocean

7-6-80

知公心在
少事何全
心乃民半
却分心也
路人心也

23/1/80

franco Beltrametti



YOU WILL BE HAPPY HERE

Beside all the pain you have caused
neatly covering the lies you must have been
living to apply such unfeelingness so abruptly.
No one else will breathe this air.
It is all yours. Perhaps you will find
you'll be able to relax the lungs & let
the air stale beside the pale pool that was once
ocean circulate simply within yourself.
Your thoughts have become poles
tall as buildings, lines merging flat
in a landscape of duplication that will keep.

PERFECT

Everything's so right

Flower right where it should be

Birds singing all in tune

The spring wind is full of feeling

Blowing my silk dress open

TREADING

The sky's just not life
I don't care who you know
Everybody eventually leaves
Call it "exile," I don't know
Where they go. Far away,
I suppose. Way out there. That's where
I would go. But I don't.

I did once, went as far
Away as possible, but they went farther.
Let's take a break on the oar, before
The boat pushes one more wave farther
Or closer to shore. Treading.

It must be either day or night
I forget which obsessive thought
Never disappears like me.

CHILD'S PORTION

For you, love is like glass. You can see through it.
I get cut. Everything bad happens overnight.
Then you were there like a comforter, like a storm
Like a metaphor without equals, like a swing flare.

I went to see you
You called later and hadn't recognized who I was.
You move so fast, as many lovers as days
To be blunt I put my head through the wall
One more time to stare before start, like
A dictionary, a beat up car, an act of kindness
Like a pratfall just off screen, a rust scrape.

So to see some romantic spot
You slide the door open, engraved invitations
Scouring the hills waiting for panic. Holding
On, wrapping up in each other, this is a dream now,
Mother walks in. Like bliss, there is the end
Of bliss, like that, like how much sadness, do you know?

If I had to name it, if the sun were to say
"Sit down and make tea." If the dog's life
Didn't rule. If I didn't love women so.
I reach into the quiver, into the pouch, into
The river, and pull the dart out, the arrow,
The lipstick, the trout. If I turn around

You are being there too, so unlisted the bills
Don't get delivered. Like a new beginning after
The old beginning fades like a wild flower
In the hand of a child on the way back home.

Oh, it was beautiful, and you are mine forever,
And you are doing it to me now, like love's remains.

PREVIOUSLY SAVING

You no think me

You no love me

This old custom

Break heart

Folk custom

Way-things-used-to-be

Previously saving each other

We think go ho ho

So difficult, loyalty

Like white heads

Disappearing in white water

WE ARE DOWN

We are down
Then we're up
We're up all night
Mr. and Mrs. Baby are in town
Bright lights chill
Instead of winter we have evening
They're everywhere
The people of the street switch
They remember when young
Then machinery clanks
Big baby wanders
We notice the cloud heaps
We leap in anticipation
Instead of concentrate

I LOVE YOU

I love you
So much
I'm beside myself
That's the other me
Beside me
Passing into dust
Against the side
Of the beautiful girl
Coming to decide
I'm a beautiful woman
And maybe
I like myself I don't
Like myself
Besides us
Passing into dust
Against the side
Of the we
We're separated into
Something breezeline
Without guarantees
But whatever you are
That I feel home
And no getting away

From it or with anything

Without you

Everything's everything

And me

(I can't really

Speak for you)

Nothing in particular

No place, neither

HER CONSTANT LOVER

Before

What's interesting

Is the writing

Which I was too stingey to share

You wanted me

To show you

What I do

This I couldn't

(For whatever reasons)

Between us, came in between

And (then) some fantastic dope

When we hold on

A refusal to part

When we leave

Is no lie

Wherever we land

Fusion offers a mayonnaise

Often pictured at home

Some things, I can help

Loving you

Between

My mouth and your mouth

And god's ear

Whoever, whatever

ACCORDING TO THE LIGHTS

According to the lights, the night
which is part of the day much as
the brain is part of the body, finds
everyone growing up, not that
they're sleeping with anyone, the
moment's passed You notice some-
thing -- you're very young -- you think
you're in love, you say I'll end up
with the person I love, they're inter-
esting, but I'll lay back, not let
on So that's how it began, out of
the sky Note how the clouds assemble
to establish appeal, it's as if this
evening and any other never happened,
the atmosphere's so wedding For mood,
you think about how I think about
and so on, the parts of the body and
what we think they go with, occasion-
ally glimpsing them gone, what's their
importance among the important people,
sometimes even love is bigger than
a handshake, its duration, its com-
ing apart Bands tighten such radio as

if to depart We don't stand up, but
keep staring at what we see, trying to
imagine an opinion of ourselves, lifted
to imagine things, but keeping looking
over

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible, appearing to be a list or series of notes.]

WHEN YOU START

When you start
to miss somebody
and it's not
the somebody you miss,
nothing's missing
something else is happening,
what that something else is
that's for someone else to say
Nuages begin to be nuances
which is interesting
and attention gets attenuated,
often there's traffic
but in another sense
there's a possibility
so much is stress
making a body feel klunky Look
at yourself this way,
when square's passed
through a cubism
even Plato might have drooled at,
doesn't sex
in an infinite nostalgia
remind you of something's somebody,

terminating in competition, you
win you lose, that's the way
it goes, the real you, when

YOU'RE AWAY, VISITING

You're away, visiting Working
things out I'm working, thinking
of you We get together,
it's a pleasure We don't it's not
You're my weather Today, I'm
in, as every day, for surprises comma
I don't miss you, but still
love you, there's no permission
Outside things in their toll booths
have taken their toll, we're outside
come through Whatever happens, I
guess will happen If we're together,
would make me very happy, if
not, that's the way it goes Either way

Duke.

To vouch this is no proof,
Without more certain and more overt test
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming do prefer against him.

Othello, Act 1, scene 3 (lines 106-9)