

into the flame, we stumbled  
shouting up -- you stamped your foot

& hurried out into the brown cold  
hunting owl calling

you with a story of the strange beasts who make  
fires hotter than the sun

I shook my grandfather's hand  
"Well, I'll see you in the other world," he said.

I nodded.  
"Yes, on the mountains in the other world."

My grandfather shook his head very slowly.  
"There are no mountains in the other world," he said.

-- John Oliver Simon

Berkeley CA

on judgement

in a place like this, there are bound to be pirates and  
elevator operators. there are bound to be liars, old folks  
at home, selfish people, sunshine people, idiots, cartoon-  
ists, parachutists, third basemen, evangelists, politicians,  
marxists, splinter removers, scissor sharpeners, greens-  
keepers, miracle believers, ice suckers, social workers,  
lone rangers, strangers, fire eaters, good humor men, people  
who are under the false impression that their houses are  
mansions, people who are quite sure they must be the dumbest,  
cotton candy vendors, lumberjacks, neurasthenics, spelunkers,  
little wooden people, soy bean eaters, palsied people, proph-  
ets, conspirators against the boss, sub-contractors, false  
teeth people terrified of apples, swimmers of the english  
channel, climbers of mount everest, strippers, trickers,  
hookers, librarians, exhibitionists, carpenters, firemen,  
yo-yo manufacturers, sex-emanating receptionists, murderers,  
stowaways, hi-jackers, incompetents, whiners, skin-divers,  
gypsies, bubble gum freaks, bearded ladies, midgets, pantied  
men in front of mirrors, cheats, word-keepers, blood-soaked  
soldiers, aviators, yodelers, bee keepers, name callers,  
insect studiers, ticket takers, nose pickers, nose job  
doctors, junkies, smugglers, burglars, burlap bag makers,  
cellists, mumblers to themselves walking down fifth avenue,

ravers at nothing, people who are in spiritual contact with cleopatra, inheritors, sky-divers, grocers, beer guzzlers, complainers, people just stupid enough never to get out of new york city, glue sniffers, john paper crumplers, john paper folders, show people, show business show people, one-armed discus throwers, hardhats, crooners, wooers, explorers, women's liberationists, alarmists, jesus freaks, snake lovers, insomniacs, pimpled marilyn monroes, pencil biters, lacrosse enthusiasts, butlers, psychiatric aides, looneys, billboard painters, riders into a violet sunset, quitters, tap dancers, melancholy people specializing in 40's nostalgia, finger tappers, senators, gossips, rose gardeners, soapbox debators, spear throwers, vine swingers, art historians, museum guards, security guards who were pronounced dead and woke up in the morgue, misanthropes, wholesome people, architects, turkish bathers, revolutionaries, karate experts, fire seekers, fire escape sneaks (those bastards), peeping toms, clowns, soap opera freaks, alchemists, envious people, thumb suckers, cheek biters, pill takers, very dull people who once made a great catch in a little league game, saloon sweepers, salvation army trumpeteers, astrologists, tumblers under tables, butchers, thinkers for the worst, coopers, barbers, candlestick makers, stagecoach drivers, cavalrymen, poets, tattooed people, daughters of the american revolution, daughters of daughters and thus themselves daughters of the american revolution, sons of cousins of daughters of the american revolution, sons of bitches with whiskey on their breath, villains, masochists, scrubwomen, air hammerers, monolog givers, goodyear blimp pilots, fortune tellers, orphans, adulterers, moonshine makers, harvesters, milk walkers, moon walkers, milk drinkers with oreos, goat fornicators, bomb inventors, snake charmers, warlocks, levitationists, cab drivers, scab pickers, insurance salesmen, painters, beatniks, bohemians, psychedelicists, burpers, burned out freaks, nowhere men, lovers of nothing, bores, paranoids, christian scientists, progressive educators, kindergarten teachers, dreamers without pants flying dreams, dreamers of wild animals and water rats and wolves licking at the turquoise moon so strange, fuller brushmen, martyrs, retardates, hamburger countermeasures, hamburger repairmen, fullbacks, bell ringers, humpbacks, bootblacks, moneybacks, dentists, hangmen, fascists, aryans, bigots, journalists, part time nurses, coonskin cap wearers, cake bakers, patty cakery, giant lakers, energy takers, spaghetti throwers, sculptors, human sacrifices, beggars, self-emulators, strange people, long distance runners, midnight cowboys, filmmakers, light-show creators, waterbed repairmen, arabs, spades, old ladies, bikers, litterers, little leaguers, long-limbed golden bicyclers to the shore, organ grinders, fraternity presidents, rope jumpers, knuckle crackers, lovers of saltine crackers, people with great walnuts from mrs. henderson's walnut tree but no nutcracker, breast feeders, big dreamers, wheeler-dealers, pushers, derby wearers, race car drivers, skinny

dippers, nudist campers, national park campers never getting out of their trailers, book freaks, magazine worms, critics, punctual people, newspaperboys, marble champions, prostitutes, pimps, lesbians, transvestites, virgins, freckled sophomores, beauticians, morphologists, grumpy people, fabulous whistlers, great whittlers, people with undecipherable handwriting, pizza flippers, playwrights, ancient people, youthful mariners, people so wrinkled, first breathers, fathers of the child, people existing on commodity mashed potatoes, gazers from crumbling tenement windows, dreamers of the homeland, ivy leaguers, watchmakers, presidents of monopolies, hoboes, caboose wavers, caboose wavees, star gazers, organ players, incredible egotists who border on megalomania, fishers of men, pipe smokers, hash smokers, opium dopes, skinny weaklings who got beat up on the beach and sent into charles atlas, ballet dancers, spotlight grabbers, arguers, self-righteous people, dog lovers, heavy sleepers, sleep walkers, sleep joggers, officers of the day, pilots who flew missions in viet nam stoned on acid, mail clerks, whalers, rodeo men, zookeepers, parakeet conversationalists, old ladies with ear trumpets, englishmen with crumpets in their shoes, silver fox lookers, elephant snorers, people with patience enough to read this list, kleptomaniacs, nymphomaniacs, people with oedipus complexes, solemn people, practical jokers, tactiturn people, indians, professors, people with texan accents, people with no accents whatever, people with no tongues, high society people, sailboat racers, world travellers, debutantes, snowmen builders, antique collectors, antique makers, dude ranch runners, counter spies, diplomats, oil tycoons, raccooned-faced people, wearers of eight and a half gallon hats, stetson hat salesmen, masked men, vagrants, wanderers, surfers, frauds, flotsam, cops, robbers, extortionists, blackmailers, black listers, blackshirts, flesh eaters, arsonists, indifferent people, college dropouts, draft dodgers, people with 365 for a draft number, big game hunters, hustlers, life guards, sunset watchers, authorities, hot chocolate drinkers, embezzlers, streetcorner discussers, streetcorner disgusters, wavers with handkerchiefs from trains, dukes, kings, jesters, charioteers, bull fighters, veterinarians, linguists, cathedral freaks, pistachio nut freaks, strauss freaks, cataclysmic singers, seventy-six trombone lovers, seventh day adventists, satanists, vegetarians, midnight walkers, butterfly lovers, butterscotch pudding addicts, acrobats, jugglers, soft-hearted people, old men with hearts of gold and ventricles of pyrite, farmers of a future, rice krispie freaks with sugar flavored droplets of milk on their ears, people with three pairs of sneakers, people with itchy beards, people with itchy crotches scratching on the sly, dandelion wine makers, valets, people with lousy breaths, people with very congenial grandmothers, people accidentally pictured in volkswagen commercials or resort postcards, hangers from chandeliers, beaters of heads against walls,

tuggers out of little remaining hair, leapers from 77th story building windows, and others,

but

in a place like  
this, i would wager there isn't a single one of us in the  
human race that is a non-person. i would further wager  
that there isn't a single one of us in the human race  
that is a non-hero.

fourth grade

billy lived in a house on the corner.  
he had a pretty mother. but no friends.

every day at lunchtime, billy would ride  
his bicycle right up to the edge of the

oily dirt playground with a big cyclone fence  
carrying a big bag of all kinds of candy bars

that he had bought with money stolen from his  
pretty mother, and scream, "come and get them,"

illy lived in use on corner.  
he had a retty other. but nds.

flinging the candy bars over the iron barrier and  
into the oily dirt; ballgames would stop all of a sudden

as they saw him coming on his bike and went  
racing towards the edge of the playground, and grappled.

ly in se on rner.  
had other. but no s.

responsibility occurrence

"i will wait & see,"  
he mumbles/

while at the same time  
pyramids crumble at ghiza

a surgeon's hands  
wither to pinecones