

GETTING OUT THE VOTE

why do i vote at all?

mostly, i guess it's like betting the army-navy game,
or alabama-notre dame, lsu-tulane.

i mean, i'm not attached to any of those teams,

but a little wager makes it more fun to watch the game.
and t.v. viewing -- election night not excepted --
is one of my constant occupations, more so certainly
than politics.

i make the latter serve the former.

also since i invariably back the loser,
i am free to vilify the subsequent administration.
i convince myself, and sometimes even others,
that things would be different if my man had won.

there's one more reason -- i still vote in belmont shore,
although i haven't lived there in eight years.

i go back to when my child was just conceived,
my marriage consummated, and we were so poor

we used to trick or treat on halloween, in sheets,
and take our booty to the beach,
with a pint of applejack if we were lucky,
and whatever my crazy-lovely wife had cadged from the
cafeteria.

life was all promise, then, and lyricism.

i thought no place could be more beautiful than long beach,
no body more enticing than maureen's. i knew better,
but i was young enough to live the lies of love.

i've never really wanted, though, to turn the clocks back,
and there's a time to cease indulging sentimental journeys.
if i don't vote in this election, the registrar will

order cremated
the remains of that barely recognizable old me.

SHORT-WAVE INQUISITION

One of the few values of a Catholic education
is that we were taught that nothing
that we did or said or thought
was hidden from the Snooper in the Sky.

There was an interim after dropping out of the Church
where it was an immense pleasure
to savor an impure desire or unsavory ambition
in the privacy of one's own id,

but in this present era of tapes, videotapes, and
of stress evaluators, micro-cameras, and psychological
lie detectors,
testing,

we're right back where we started,

except that now it isn't only God
that knows you at your worst,

it's everybody.

The trick is to keep a perfectly blank mind.
You may have noticed an increasing number of public
servants
getting very good at that.

UP THE DOWN ELEVATOR

"Whatcha been up to?" I ask,
and I get more reply than I bargained for.

"Nothing," he says. "None of it did any good.
A lot of us got lost back in the sixties.
You were right to just keep writing."

These are the seventies
when what was won with body's blood and soul's
is overturned by fiat.

The perishable rubbish of a personnel file
leaves no room for moral victories.

I'LL LET YOU WRITE YOUR OWN PUNCH-LINE TO THIS ONE

After Betty Ford's interview,
Police Chief Edward Davis held a news conference.
He was upset at what he had heard.
He was afraid it would encourage
"premarital sex before marriage."

-- Gerald Locklin
Long Beach CA