

says she's quite good
and the next thing i know
she's in here
reading & grading my poems
mine are just slivers & shards
bits & pieces that don't fit
mole poems
written with my hands
turned bottom up
under the weight of the sky
she says they get a "B"
i think she's a vegetarian
and doesn't know that
they're Grade A like beef
to be ground round & consumed

KETCHUP IN KETCHAM

gene asked me
to lay a flower on his grave
which isn't much
just a rectangle of concrete
with the name
and a couple dates
close by a tree
with a blackbird
yelling & diving at my head
every time i tried
to get close enough to lay
the weeds i'd gathered
on the tombstone

i wondered whether
he was really laid away
down there
under that rectangle
or up in that tree.
i finally managed to get
the blossoms down
& left.

driving north out of town
i hit a dog
ran right under the wheels
nothing i could do
but hunt around until
i found his people
& deliver him
still alive at least,
then stop by the salmon river
to wipe the dried blood

off the car seat
looking kinda like spilt ketchup
that's dried on the drainboard
or on last week's dishes
still waiting there
to be washed clean
& laid in the cupboard.

AT LEAST A BLUE GUITAR WOULD BE COOLER

over a hundred
for over a week,
with no relief
& 3 house guests:

1. he's a fancy-dancer
& almost won the pow-wow.
2. she doesn't say much
but does do the dishes.
3. he likes wallace stevens
& wants to take "nude" photos
of me & my old lady.

it's hot.
i'm sweating & trying
to cool down.
after i tell #3 that
i can see only one way
to look at a blackbird
& that the only jar i ever saw
in tennessee was filled
with whisky,
not much is said.

he (#1) tries to fix the furnace
& offers suggestions for the refrigerator.
she (#2) is gone to the laundromat
with my old lady,
who wanted to pose "nude"
on the dryer for him (#3),
the would be poet-photographer.

that's the way it's been going.
the mercury rises,
but life goes on
like in a ball of snakes,
you try to follow one body
but you just can't do it.

-- Kirk Robertson

Fallon NV