

or the mountains or at wild animals
or at women
I like those things too
especially the wild animals and the women
but when I look at those old boxcars
with faded designs upon them
and those flats and those fat round tankers
I get quiet inside
I get what men get from such things
I feel better and it's good to feel better
not needing the reason.

2 BUDDIES

I am not sure of our exact ages
but Moses was one of my first real
friends:
Jewish and very strange
and my second real friend was
Red --
he had one arm
and wore a cast on the other:
an arm of pure white with a brown glove
over the artificial fingers.

Moses vanished first.
my father told me about him:
he pointed to the garage
a large white and yellow structure
with sagging doors:
"your friend Moses was caught in there
doing something to a 5 year old
girl. they got him."

Red was more durable.
we went swimming together in the public
pools and he had to take his arm off
and he splashed about with his arm-and-a
half, the little arm ending just below
the elbow and it looked like it had
tiny nipples on it
but more
they looked like tiny fingers.

the other boys got on him for his
half arm and his tiny fingers
but I was a very mean lad
and I told them
in terms most definite
that the pool belonged to

everybody
and to let him
god damn it
swim
or else.

this brought us trouble later:
a gang would follow us home
to his house
more than once
standing outside
screaming at us
until we came out
and met them on the front
lawn.

I wasn't as good as Red.
he was very good with his pure white arm
with the brown glove over his fingers.
it was usually around 6 or 7
against 2
but Red simply clubbed them down
one after another
slingshotting that arm out
I heard the sound of it against
skulls
and there were boys all over the lawn
holding their heads
and this made me meaner
and I got one or two of my
own
and soon everybody but Red and
myself would be gone off the
street.

we went swimming in the public pool
together
more and more.
there seemed to be new boys
always more new boys
who didn't quite understand
how it worked.
they just didn't know that we just
wanted to swim and be left
alone.

about Moses
I'm not so sure
but in a way
he must have been rather
arm-and-one half
too

his mother could sure
cook
I remember all those good
cooking smells all through his
house.

I never saw Red's mother cooking
anything.

LOST DOG

we had just come out of a cafe
about 2 in the afternoon
and I noticed this thin starving dog
he was dizzy and bewildered in the hot sun
and he kept running out into the boulevard
in wild circles
just being missed by automobiles.

"let's get him out of the street," she said.

"o.k.," I said.

we got into the car and drove along to where
he was.

I finally coaxed him into the car.
he was still trembling.

"let's take him home with us," she said.

"I'm not that good a person," I said.

"I'm just going to take him to a nice shady park
where he can get some water and some picnic
scraps."

I drove him to the park grounds and let him
out. then I swung around and got on the Golden
Gate freeway.

a man pulled up alongside of me as we drove along.
"you son of a bitch! I saw what you did!"

"what are you talking about?"

the man was furious:

"I saw you dump your dog! I saw you let him out!
I saw you dump him in the park!"

we were driving side by side at 60 miles per
hour. he had his woman with him.
she was frightened and silent. so was
mine.

"hey, that wasn't my dog!"