

with the bedclothes weeping
the telephone
filing for divorce?

If the sofa
takes out another loan
the cats
get the stove
and the trash
can goes off on a
vacation in the tropics
how do I make the rent
with mayonnaise
in the morning?

You can't build equity
in wheat bread
you just can't.

Without true love
the lawnmower sputters
without gasoline
the toaster gets depressed.

How am I to carry on
with the ashtrays
in convulsions
the endtables
having a nervous breakdown?

There's no tomorrow
in the clothes dryer
no October
in dead Wednesday.

BEAUTY PACKS HER BAGS

Beauty packs her bags and
moves out. She's fed to the teeth with
all this pretentious bullshit, the elaborate
posturing. And she doesn't give a goddamn
for your amateur standing.

Another willful female hits the trail.

What's left? ruffled bedclothes
(her scent on the pillowcase), dappled
curtains that swell with the hot evening breeze,

swaying mountains of dirty dishes in the sink,
suicidal cowboy -- too sad -- on the radio.

While you stumble all night room to
room, glass of scotch in hand, two left feet,
kicking up the carpet, knocking over lamps,
the overflowing ashtrays, a twitch
in each bloodshot eye,
rivers, rivers of tears.

-- David Barker

Lakewood CA

CHAIN LETTER 1980

In the mail
comes one of those chain letters.
It starts with a prayer
and ends with a warning:

a man who received the letter
and did not continue it, lost
his job. Another, not believing
in it, threw it away
and died 9 days later.
PLEASE DO NOT DESTROY THIS.

And so 56 hours after re-
ceiving this letter, it must be
on its way (20 times copied)
to someone else, or my own
fate is sealed.

Some way to start a Monday.
A prayer and a death threat.

It says a kind-hearted missionary
from South America
started the whole thing.

Last week, there were earthquakes.
This week, chain letters.
56 hours have gone by.
I wait like someone finishing
the last few lines of a story.
An O. Henry ending.