

remember how a few minutes later  
I began crying. I thought  
my parents had abandoned me  
in Tijuana. They'd  
only gone up to the ticket window.

This is my favorite  
photograph of myself.  
Someday I'd like to go find  
that movie theatre but I  
know I never will.

#### ME AND HOWARD HUGHES

Listen, I've got a great start on a receding  
hair line, a real Howard Hughes look, I mean  
it's high now, getting way back there, like  
one of those guys you hear about, those old  
guys who make it through, who never give up  
and somehow carry on, and they all wonder how  
he does it like that, never realizing that  
there is very little choice involved and  
that it's either this and merely this or  
nothing.

My clothes are getting pretty shabby now,  
especially the cords, they're worn smooth  
at the knees and the shirts are just poor  
old shirts like you'd see on any ordinary  
working man, just plain old ragged shirts,  
the socks are thin with holes in the heels,  
shit, it's all worn out now, but this is  
no great plan of mine, no new attack on the  
arts, shit, it's just the way things are.

-- David Barker

Salem OR

#### THE BLIMP EXPLODES

a t.v. commercial and a simple twist of fate have  
succeeded in doing for me what i'd always feared would  
be my greatest task and failure as a parent; namely  
to convince my little seven year old that god was  
either dead to the world or had never existed;

the commercial involves two nuns driving down a road  
with a goodyear blimp following them; they console  
each other on their dangerous journey with the

thought of how good and safe it is to have it there always, floating just behind and over the shoulder; my little girl saw the commercial and asked me if that was god; i figured this was as good a place as any to begin lessons on the preposterous inventions people have envisioned for creation; i said yes;

at first i was afraid i'd made a real mistake; everywhere we went she would constantly twist her head about looking for the blimp and ask "daddy, where is god?" i'd usually shrug my shoulders or reply "not around here apparently;"

and then occasionally at baseball games or watching football on t.v. we'd see the blimp and she'd say "daddy, there's god!" "yes, honey" i'd say "god's real big on sports;"

it was the simple twist of fate that saved me from eventually having to straighten out the malicious and fallacious aspects of my theological lesson; we were watching a show on t.v. covering the great moments of the twentieth century when the hindenbergs filled the screen; "god" screamed my little girl "a really big god;" i pulled her in close to me; when it exploded she was terrified and threw her arms around me; "god blew up, daddy" she said; "yes, honey" i said, patting her on the back with my consoling hand "that was the last of the really big ones;"

the next time it arose was when we were driving down the 405 freeway where off to the side is a vacant area with a goodyear blimp secured to a platform centered in it; "daddy" she asked "why is god all alone by himself?" "protection, honey" i said "it's sort of a zoo;" "is god one of those endangered species?" she asked suddenly; i looked over at my little girl looking up at me as if finally demanding the real answer; "yes, honey" i said; "god's a dying breed"

#### SAFE INSANE

i've often wondered how safe and sane i am; does one establish the other; i live in seal beach in a tract home with my parents; i feel very safe here but have real doubts about my sanity; after all i'm twenty-six and entirely unable to support myself; i haven't even a realistic notion of how; even in elementary school i began to recognize my lack of career objective; i wanted to be a trash man; i am a trash man except that it seems to be my vocation to create it; at least my father thinks so; i just finished a play about my father and mother;