

we eat them in bed, backs
to the wall, watching a movie
on the vcr. regular pizza
is just too heavy. we've
talked about this. we've
come to this conclusion.
also that we love
one another.

MY MOZART SERIES

she wanted to know why i took a picture of the bananas
in the basket, and i told her that i did so because their
yellow was so bright and inviting. i don't think she
accepted this as much of a reason though, and so when i
took a picture of the sink in the bathroom i really had
something to answer for. but i had never lived with such
an expensive camera before and i was charmed with how
easy it was to use, and how sharp and glossy the results
were. the thing made me look like a professional, at least
in the eyes of this amateur. and i kept at it: recording
many still lifes of the apartment, until pictures were
piled so high on the dresser that it was getting hard to
see in

the mirror. finally it got to the point where there
wasn't anything to snap away at anymore. i had used the
place up, so to speak, and i had no intentions of going
outside. there was nothing intimate in the outside world
to me, and i really considered myself a photographer of
the intimate only. so the only thing left for me that held
any interest was to take pictures of the stereo while
different pieces of favorite music were being played. i
started with mozart. i did a series of twenty-seven photos
for every one of his piano concertos. all of them i owned
on tape so it wasn't hard to do this. it was called "my
mozart series." on the back of each photo was marked the
number of the concerto. of course, this didn't sit too
well with my girlfriend either, and she set out on a
campaign of nagging questions concerning it. for my part:
i just accused her of not appreciating mozart.

BEFORE I SIT DOWN TO WRITE

before i sit down to write i put an old movie
on the tv and sit on the purple couch for
about an hour with a newspaper in my lap
i ignore

before i sit down to write i go in the kitchen
and make myself a big cheese sandwich, pour
myself a glass of wine and stand in the window
and watch the cars passing below on the highway

before i sit down to write i put some music on
the stereo and walk around adjusting the pictures
on the walls, even going so far as to rearrange
some of them, putting them in places i never
thought of before

before i sit down to write i go in the bathroom
and trim my beard, washing the hairs down the
drain with ice-cold water

before i sit down to write i live forty years,
nine months and fifteen some odd days in needful
yet exhausting preparation

POETRY HAS RUINED ME

my father likes to tell people that poetry has ruined
my life. it doesn't bother me anymore when i happen to
hear him say this. all my life he has been a source of
negative comment. also i am at the age now where we've
said just about everything to one another so many times
that nothing has any punch anymore. and as far as poetry
ruining my life goes, well, there is some truth to this,
at least in some regards. for example: because of poetry
i will never keep my lawn neatly cut. it'll grow wild
and the weeds will have their own way. my car will al-
ways be an old jalopy. it will be ruined with rust, and
the insides will always be piled high with newspapers
and model airplanes that won't fly (if ever i decide to
attempt building and flying model airplanes). my house
will be in perpetual shambles, eaten to the ground by
poetry as if by crazed carpenter ants. and my children
will be worthless. my ruined life will have ruined
children running around it. they will be ruined by a
lack of authority on my part, and they will run free
to terrorize the neighborhood and eventually grow up
and have ruined children of their own, who in turn will
go out and ruin the four corners of the world. my
wife will be ruined too. i'll ruin her with poetry
just like i've ruined my own life. in time her
teeth will turn black, her hair will turn white and
her skin will rot with ruin. all this will happen
to her from the effects of my poetry. i too will die
from it. ruined in my grave. honored in heaven.

— Ronald Baatz
Kingston NY