

restores our courage in the face of cowardly
sobrieties. It laughs with us at our most
serious sonnets, weeps at our pratfalls. It
remembers us; it takes us back.

Finally, this blessed beer, it eases us towards
sleep.

A Traveller

He got off the freeway at the nearest ramp.
Fumbling in his pocket for change
he asked the porcelain attendant,
"How much you getting for a gallon these days?"
"A dollar-ten a pint," the other replied,
never once cracking a smile.
"My God!" the man exclaimed,
only then remembering that there
was no longer any God, or even,
for that matter, any California.
He drove wildly from the station,
the standard man still grinning horribly
in the rear-view mirror.
Back on the freeway he pressed it to the floor
and searched the billboards for a familiar sign.
Why had he failed to notice it before --
every single phosphorescent square read:
"You Are Already There!"
except the last which grinned "Ha Ha."

And why were there no other cars on the road?
How long had he been on the road?
Had he ever been to California?
Why was the gas gauge rising to full?

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach, California