

wunderkind

his days were parsley
and his dishes always grimy.
he wore his hair in shirley temple curls
and his levis one mosaic inch

below the crack of his ass.
they were always asking him
what he was working on.
he kept a tight-lipped dignity.

he died at twenty-six,
and left no odes behind.
his immortality consists
of wry ambivalence.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach, CA

Gus Stackpole

Out they go, leaving Gus Stackpole and his store, rejecting him and his impossible offerings, impossible because, he says, they're foolish as death, or as life, the one being no saner than the other these days: with either, he says, you get stopped, and coming or going it makes no difference

What does he offer? A split ruler. Does it measure twice or half as much?
A bone. Which? He doesn't know. They are all the same to him.
The one he has appeals to no one.
A stuffed bat. Stuffed with what? Gus never asked. Nor do his customers. A bat is a bat. Who wants to know more these days?
A kidney. Painted blue. Why blue? Who complains? Who bothers?
A Pillow case. Stained.
A mattress depressed on the left side, his side.
A pair of snowshoes. One larger than the other.
A satrap. Who knows what a satrap is? Those who know don't want one.
A well. Ridiculous!
A scientific doll showing all the organs and, as they say, zones.
Almost a sale. But Gus made a planter of it.
Towels smelling of greases and onions.

Gus has many such things. He offers, offers, offers, but no one has ever bought. Perhaps, he says, he ought to offer something besides himself.

-- William Sayres

Washington, DC
Kabul ID

In the Orchards Where She Lay

In the orchards where she lay in the orchards under the bright sun of day favored by nature in that anthill darling one butterflies in absentia, butterflies in abeyance, butterflies in the abstract, butterflies printed on my Bien Joli mattress...Katmandu my darling darling in Nepal...there was that gorgeous rise of bosom before me always looming just ahead of the next rise, then a necklace and out again in lace under her white girdle in the green woods in her white girdle in her extremity stumbling across the fallen body I little thought at the time she would be my wife some day; in that it was disastrous, in that it was collision course.

Maybe on page ninety we will start the story won't that be grand or page ninety two or page ninety seven or page one hundred we will start the story darling children won't that be grand indeed darling children, and then some.

Grander and stronger all the time darling children and stronger and stronger all the time darling children. And then some darling children and then some. How about that darling children?

Wherein Dwells the Honey

Now or never the sweet lady said to me in her cups now or never the sweet lady said to me in her cups now or never the sweet lady said to me in her cups and straws and strawbed and haystack and open fields and a train and a cinder track and a girdle missing thrown out the window sir and a bridle path sir low hanging branches sir the toast has popped sir, low hanging branches, in the thicket there was sir and out of all of this sir you have made something that still was there and there and there darling and there and there and there darling