

Image

Going down Pacific Coast Highway
a Volkswagon with Captain Ahab
lashed to the roof.

"... here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For Future years." -- William Wordsworth

Lines

Composed a few miles above Downtown Long Beach

It's one of those days on which assurance sits.

There was no bufferin, listerine, or toilet
paper and my morning hack looks greener.
George Allen said he probably would not be
coaching the Rams next year. Inger Stevens
killed herself. I spotted the start of a
sure shot chancre. At the clinic the doctor
chortled I needed a chest x-ray, a shot, and
two blood suckings, but don't expect results
for at least a week. (Cut to shredded nails.)

Beer tastes like formica. Pool's no fun.
My once devoted wife now turned cutthroat
career girl is demanding separate check books.
(Cut to guffawing bank tellers.)

I intend to stay up late -- I know this lode
of melancholy won't last but you just never
know. It might keep clouding trails of glory.
And everybody to his own Tintern Abbey.

To The Delphic Oracle

I've got news for you:
none of your intolerable music, please.
I'm alive and that's the best of it.
What could you possibly add to that?

"riches in my future?"
They certainly aren't in my past. But maybe
the Bank of America is planning to will
me a bottomless credit card. I hate Irish
songs too much to buy a Sweepstakes ticket

and my paycheck grows according to scale,
which rimes with snail. I know how much
I'll be making ten years from now.
I don't need you to remind me.

"fame is lurking around the corner?"
Crouched maybe but not ready to spring.
I'm the exception that proves the rule
about everybody having a novel in him.
And you don't think poems like this
are going to do it for me, do you?

"someone near and dear is going to die?"
No shit. John Garfield told me that.
in Body and Soul, remember? Or can't
you handle the past, Del?

"science will conquer cancer?"
Brian Piccolo will be glad to hear that.
Stop trying to make particulars
sound like generalizations. There will
always be a lost chord, a philosopher's stone.

"man will learn to live with his fellow man?"
O, sure. Particularly when he can't get
along with a woman, his best part.

Now, now. None of your riddles.
I'm too old to marry my mother
but I do have a cute sister.

I don't pretend to be able to look
into the future but I predict,
in Drew Pearson fashion, that
tomorrow the world will produce
no surprises.

sedation

i've got to watch it. it's near vacation time and
everybody's running off at the mouth about places.
i mustn't let myself get carried away by the
sweet sounds of Pamplona, Estremadura, Milano,
or even Dubonnet. it's too easy for me to for-
get how i hate to travel. i should mount a
map on the wall with pins pointing out the high-
lights of my junketry: clapped in Cuba; mugged
in Morocco; ptomained in Turkey; shanghaiad in
Buffalo; buffaloed in Shanghai. but instead
i'll have to unpack a few hates from memory: