

wheeling through the circle
and the steps that do not matter,
your bare legs
itching to escape
the weight of your body.

But, like a tourist's snapshot, you don't move.
If you're even dreaming,
you dream of static pyramids
or locks by the Red Sea. I dream
enough for two: both of us
will wake tomorrow dancing.

-- Jack W. Thomas

San Diego, CA

roger corbin

is co-owner of the 49ers tavern,
ex-marine, swing-shift probation
officer. he sports a trademark gut
now, but he'll still put out a quite

respectable half-game of half-court
basketball. all the eligible divorcees
would like to wed him, but he only beds
them and continues waiting for miss right.

meanwhile miss right is casually being
deflowered in the next room on the waterbed
by roger's roommate rick. but rick's another poem
entirely, one that he ought to write himself.

roger is the premier pool-shot of
the bar, and lately he's extended his
domination to pin-ball. he will, however,
generously share his strategies with anyone,

and i am sure his systems work,
it's just you also need his eye,
and steady hand, and confidence.
ah, confidence! yes, i should think it takes

a lot of confidence to sign a partnership with karl,
who is as lovable as snoopy, and just as
reliable. karl is another poem also,
something of a combination huck finn,

mr. chips, and william burroughs.
confidence is what keeps roger going.
the stuff that lets you take tarawa beach-head,
i think that he still dreams america

because for all his beautiful quick-witted
dadaism, roger trusts in god, home,
country, apple-pie, and fatherhood.
of course he'll smoke a little dope,

but he will also sing the anthem loudly
at the lakers' games. i'm sure he'd go
to vietnam if he were asked, he might
even win a military victory.

and someday soon i'm sure he'll make
some nice young girl an ideal husband,
good provider, strong and silent, sexually-
knowledgeable, prudently unfaithful.

he will be generous to her, as he is always
generous to all of us: free pitchers,
quarters in the jukebox, takes the coin
slot from the table on slow afternoons.

he loans us money, doesn't hassle if a glass
or cue stick's broken, doesn't hassle
if you stay a little after hours or
get drunk and clear the place out with your singing.

still the bar makes money.
which is a credit to the clientele. which might
even make roger right, that americans aren't all
assholes, just folks. i'll drink to that.

scratch one

hangover, out of sorts, due for an
appointment with the income tax
consultant, i stopped by the office
to pick up the mail. it was

a bland day, no rejection slips, nothing
accepted, but someone had posted
a sign in the mailroom: funeral
services for weldon niva 1:00 o'clock

at sunnyside memorial chapel.
that's strange, i thought, to give
a funeral for weldon niva when
he isn't even dead yet. it seemed

in questionable taste to say the least.
granted, he was hardly the most
protean, galvanic, or mercurial
instructor in our midst, but certainly