

worm wood



in you - 48

The Wormwood Review

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THE CAR PREACHER'S SON
TALKING AT A ROTARY CLUB LUNCHEON MEETING
AT
TWELVE O' CLOCK NOON
IN
THE VIKING ROOM
OF
MASON'S RESTURANT

When my father died, I didn't
attend the funeral (what's the use
dead'en buried ... world's here for the
living); anyway, I was busy hanging

plastic pennants that day (sound real
good flapping in the breeze) -- hot orange,
yellow & blue ones between them clear
glass 75 CON Edison Watt bulbs

strung like a pearl necklace over the line
of used cars on the old gravel corner lot
there on 12th Avenue. Anyway, Saturday
night was the best time to sell cars --

warm summer Saturday nights especially;
that's when the hicks came to town
and walked the polished rows, hunting
for a good deal:

kicking tires,
opening hoods,
testing springs,
& looking up the exhaust pipe

like it was some whore's twot.
Always asking What's the horsepower?
or What'll she do on a flat stretch?
between spits of tobacco.

(Listen, there's no such thing as
sales resistance.
Why, if a man believes in hisself,
he can sell anything to anybody.)

And oh god I could sell 'em
in those days! I could sell.
I could sell to the dead
if I damn-well pleased.

Then one day my mother up
and died too,
and I got the whole business:
lock, stock and

barrel at the time
I was really selling
them '56 chevy convertibles
like hotcakes

right off the proverbial griddle.
(You know, I can still remember
the names of every customer that ever
bought a new or used car

off my 1550 12th Avenue lot.)
But it was a vicious business
if you want to hear the godawful
truth. It was dog eat dog in those

days. Why, I was the only one who knew
how to get the pecker tracks
off the back seats
of the trade-ins from the teenagers.

Not that that was such a great feat,
but it's the constant attention
to the little details
that makes for a great sales record.

Actually, it was all ... well,
just some sort of miracle.
I mean how my sales pitch
alone would cure

loud tappets
cancerous rocker seals
chrome acne
rusted floor boards including --

if you'll pardon the fancy language --
all the other evils that were always
attacking the most beautiful thing
on wheels: THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE.

And oh yes how my con-
versation would tickle
the little wife's fancy
(if you know what I mean).

Even my jokes were told
a thousand times over
by the old man
when he got back home.

But oh god I want you
to know that I could sell.
I could sell to the dead ...
if there was no one else.

Say, speaking of selling,
anyone here want a ride around
the block
in my new demonstration model?

Well, don't everyone shout at once.

STOPPING OFF FOR A DRINK

she clutches me
says
what's this a poem

my flesh engorges
in her warm
hands
yes

-- James P. Bixler

San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico

from The Complete Handbook of Ways of Getting Rich
with a Medicine Show

9. PIKE'S TOOTHACHE DROPS

From the distributors of Hale's
Honey of Horehound and Tar,
Pike's Toothache Drops
cure in one minute.

10. WHOOPING COUGH

Mix a quarter pound of
ground elecampane root in
half a pint of Hartshorn
spirits. Put them in a
glazed earthen pot,

and place it in a stone
oven, with half the heat
required to bake bread.
Let bake till at the
consistency of strained

honey, and take it out.
Administer in portions of
a single teaspoonful.
If ineffective, double
the dose.

11. TINCTURE FOR WOUNDS

Digest flowers of St. Johnswort,
1 handful, in 1/2 pint of rectified
spirits, then express the liquor
and dissolve it in myrrh, aloes
and dragon's blood. It is good,
also, for frostbites.

12. CURE FOR CANCER

Boil fine Turkey figs in new
milk, which they will thicken.
When they are tender, split
and apply them, warm as can be
borne, to the part affected.

The part must then be washed each time the poultice is changed with some of the milk. Use a fresh poultice night and morning, and at least once during the day.

The first application gives a good deal of pain, but afterwards every dressing brings relief.

13. ERUPTION OINTMENT FOR FROSTED FEET, &c.

Chrome yellow and hog's lard.

14. SYRUP FOR CHILDREN

This magical syrup is made thus:
1 pound best box raisins, 1/2 ounce
of anise seed, two sticks licorice.

Split the raisins, pound the anise seed and cut the licorice fine. Add three quarts rainwater and boil.

Feed as much as the child will willingly drink. The raisins are to strenghten, the anise seed to expel the wind,

and the licorice is a physic.

-- Gerald Costanzo

Pittsburgh, PA

Bingo, Nevada

Nevada towns full of gas
and groceries and ways
to waste time. At the base
of a mountain
that touches the earth, the
first store you see
in Nevada
sells neon signs.

The Day The Baby Smiled

Carol made an apple pie.
I scrypt a poem.

Dam Flat Tire First Snow & Walked Home

Wrestled the rusted bolts a while
then put the job aside
as this morning Ezra Pound's SELECTED
CANTOS . . .

First snow.
So simply at times it falls
and no one quite captures white gyr
in a wooden box
or loose snow in the bowl
of a poem.

White lafter over roads.
Lao Tzu gone pack-ass
thru the pass
and I am my spirit treading home
upon the white garment
of my death.

treading home

words so much
crows in the snow

A William Carlos Williams Poem

-- for Peter Wellman

"as one who watches a storm
come in over the water"
and turns from the roses

in their tatters
knocking at the window
to a violin concerto

as one who lets a stone slip
between the hands
and turns to cigaret

and away from the wall
with its round hole
to the wings of the wind

as one who makes speech
 of a silver insect
 its legs kicking

against the breath
 of ashy death
 on blank white paper

and brushes the body aside
 to turn cleared pallet
 thru the typewriter

I can close your book
 dead sweet Billy
 dead old man

your poem loses its head
 as the flushed grouse
 flies at dawn

into birdshot
 off the page
 field of autumn color

Altho I walk here
 attempt to sing
 upon the footing

you put to flight
 I must lean out
 against the railing

of my own breath
 turn continually
 in continuity

from windowed concerto
 the wings of the wind
 hearing my own heart out

to follow
 as grouse from branch
 against the shot

and let my shadow sleep
 next to my body
 in peace.

-- Charles Tidler

Ganges, B.C., Canada

THREE POETS FROM VENEZUELA

Together, I and Me

When we're together
I and me
I feel something coming
loose

When I is with me
I feel the great poem
writing
and my unuseful hands cry
It's easy to say it
I can't find a better medicine
Besides
nothing is better for crying
than a lot of tears

When I am with I
or with me it doesn't matter
we know the language is incomplete
Well
I try to find a gun
to kill a person that's inside me
but it's not me is not I
it's something that shows its face for a while

When I am with me I
I am not with no one
I wish I were Rimbaud
or anyone of those damn poets
who said it all and nothing they said
I me am we you are me I
I think I forgot to say
the day was gray and that language
is a failure

-- Gabriel Jiménez Emán
Mérida, Estado Mérida, Venezuela

The Fabulists

La Fontaine this morning made
A flying saucer with his fables
Then announced:

Esop

I have decided to go away with my animals
To another planet.

Then Esop and La Fontaine
Undertook a leisurely sugary voyage
Telling each other
The most interesting bits of foolishness
about the world.

-- Orlando Flores Menessini

translated by Gabriel Jiménez Emán

Quebec

In the Renaissance of stampings
I wish I had some part of the world's money
To buy you three warm dresses --
The Primitive, the Shift of Persia creation,
And the Art Nouveau
Of unwrinkling tissue point or nylon yarn.
A dazzling combination.
I wish I had enough money.
I am a horse and I love you.

-- Victor Valera Mora

translated by Gabriel Jiménez Emán

SUN

A baby carriage passes through my eyelids.
A man with a poodle walks through my eyelids.
Flock of trees becomes a snake bundle hissing
skywards. Stones mumble a speech.
Trees in green flames. Islands flee.
Swaying, clanging of shells and fish heads just
as on the ocean's floor.

My legs stretch to the horizon. A carriage
wobbles over them. My boots reach up like towers
from a city sinking off. I'm Goliath, the giant.
I eat goat cheese. I'm a mammoth calf. Green
caterpillars sniff at me. The grass throws its
green knives and bridges and rainbows across my belly.

My ears shine pink shells totally opened. My body swells
with noise trapped inside of me. I hear Pan's bleating.
I hear the sun's vermilion music which glows on the left.
Rags flash vermilion into the world's night.
When the sun falls down, it crushes church towers
and every front garden filled with crocus and hyacinths,
blaring like tin on toy trumpets.

There flings a counterwind though, one from violet
and yolk-yellow and bottle-green: swings which
suspend an orange fist on long threads,
a singing from birdthroats hopping branches.
Frail poles from toy flags.

Tomorrow they will load the sun on a large-wheeled cart
and drive it to Caspari's gallery: an animal-headed negro,
with swollen neck, bladder nose and a wide stride,
holds fifty bucking asses. These are harnessed to the cart
during pyramid construction.

A herd of bloodcolored men will clot up: wetnurses and
midwives, cripples in wheel chairs, one crane, two
St. Vitus dancers, a man with a silk tie and a red-scented
policeman.

I can't control my happiness. Crossbars in windows shatter.
A babysitter hangs down to her hips out a window.
I can't help it: cathedrals crumble with fugues from
organs. I'd like to build a new sun. I want to crash
two of them together like cymbals, then reach a hand
to my girl. Above the roofs of your bright-yellow city,
we would sail off in lavender scent like lampshades
from tissue paper sailing with the wind.

-- Hugo Ball (1914)

from the expresssionistic magazine, Die Aktion

-- translated by Reinhold Johannes Kaebitzsch
Crystal Lake, IL

how to use your head to get a living carpet

how would you like a living carpet?

to add both splendor and natural beauty to your home

if you follow these few simple instructions

the carpet can be yours, yes yours

first find a hindu gentleman, preferably

one that speaks and can understand very little english

make the hindu understand your desire to get ahead

hindus generally know the ways of englishmen

and his conscious desires to do good in the world

to succeed and make a lot of money

for the next stage, yoga is better than hypnotism

but let's assume hypnotism has to be the case

tell your hindu you wish to use him for a little experiment

convince him of the benefits hypnotism has brought

to the western world

point out the possible spiritual advantages involved

if your hindu agrees put him in a deep state of trance

then search for his birth certificate

find the combination thereon for the removal of his head

once you have the hindu's head in your hands

make away unseen with the utmost dispatch

hide the hindu's head in the chimney

while making off to purchase a one pound packet

of dr niemann's hormone powder -- to be dissolved in water

pour the contents into an empty slops bucket

and add two pints of water

place the bucket by the hearth in your lounge

and let the hair hang over one side

in minutes the hair will start to grow

so you must get helpers and start the plaiting right away

if you wish to apply a pattern to your carpet

place large shallow trays on the floor

and allow the hair to fall into them

hair dyes can be used in the normal way

all sorts of exciting designs can be achieved

by the placing of trays in the correct positions

on the floor

fairly soon the carpet will be growing down along the hall

a little well timed manipulation is needed

to direct chosen strands of hair into different rooms

assuming all rooms open out into the hall

carpet as many rooms as you wish

when you have suitably carpeted throughout

make sure the hair does not pile up

at your back door or sink

hair that has grown into water pipes

can cost a lot of money to have removed

make sure the hair does not grow under the window

frames and doors

if the hair grows over the garden it will smother the grass

and probably kill your neighbor's best tomato plants
trapped birds can also cause a lot of trouble
so with all speed and garden shears
chop off, in one stroke, the hair
in the region where the hindu's shoulders would have been
return unseen with the head just as quickly as possible
rejoin the hindu's head upon the hindu's shoulders
bring the hindu respectfully out of the trance
and ask him if he remembers anything
the hindu will probably tell you he had been on a long
voyage, at sea
on a makeshift raft with a small sail
that looked as if it were an inflated cheek
the type that blew the clouds along
on very old maps
and when he spotted a deserted tropical island
the raft drew near, and as the craft did so
the palm trees ran down the beach to meet him.

-- opal 1 nations

London W.11, England

Peluca

They are dancing
 dragging their leaden shoes
girls in one another's arms
 with breasts showing silver ridges
 worm tracks, intaglios
held in the webs of silk halters.
like goldfish their mouths give out bubbles.
behind them the band has sunken into the ground
 so that only their flowers show
 a pair of crawling suspenders
 and a scalp that struggles to form itself
 into a pair of lips.
a livery boy delivers the rumor
 that someone sitting on a hilltop
 has charmed an airplane down
but they pass through him -- he
 doesn't know what to do -- until
 he bends into soap.
meanwhile the bankers sweating in their striped pants
 like swelling balloons
 are turning dials against the lights,
clenched against tomorrow.
the aura goes dim
 and they begin peeling off their garters

their clothes to a skin that is better than clothes.
they take little address books out.
and the mouse cars
 drive out on the floor
on their little soft wheels, with hardly a toot
to take them home.

Outlaws in North America

Only God knows how long they have been riding
calling for little girls through forests that have
 the icy light of a sunset;
bursting out like uncurling smoke, like a
 fist and an arm, where the peasants
least expect it, preceded by a
 giant angel in flour sacks
 who turning the wafer pages
 sings aloud in a nasal voice.

each carries a little of the blood of my grandmother
 crossing the sea,
 wailing
so there can be no excuse;
and fresh eggs up front
 in the velvet case attached
 to the dashboards of their jeeps.
horizons revolve and revolve through their heads,
 always grey-blue.
 their arms are bicycles
 that chew up paper.

and by 3 o'clock they are all
 drunk
 from their breakfasts,
 swinging from girders
 peering through binoculars.

I know. you want me to say
you can't tell them by their conical
white hats, their smiles and guns. their skeletons
are suits floating to the surface. and brute hands
that offer you cigars that are bombs
and on their tooled boots
roses for spurs.

-- Peter Wild

Tucson, AZ

SO AND SO MANY LARKS

383 larks have come 384

tops of birch trees seethe (385) like balloons fantastic
balloons you blow up gasdeposits on stems
curtsying like birchtrees yes exactly like
birchtrees that seethe

388 larks have come and sing over molehills 389

winter's sleeproutes are exposed winter's sleeproutes lie
exposed and full of water the sun strikes them
a morris drives up over the hill and down and
rumbles up through the sunken road and

approaches splashing along the pinetrees
the mailman's morris comes into view under 390 larks

-- Per Højholt

translated from the Danish by Nadia
Christensen and Alexander Taylor

a very humorous man
and very tumorous
with a will of iron
he died

the will was heavy reading
but left it all
for the founding of a foundry
to make parcheesi games
of stainless steel

the flinty aunts
and the nephew in plastics
protested
but the die had been cast

under a mat of juniper,
the towhee sings
from a safe place,
like a poet in
a university,
like an historian
in the train
of a victorious army

In Memoriam

He wrote with his fist clenched and his poems were full of lumps and scratches. They bled real blood, though it wasn't his own. After he died, his disciples kept his toenail parings carefully in a glass vial. It was said that eating one paring would cause you to write a good poem but eating two would condemn you to writing bad novels. The parings were especially good with Bordelaise sauce, though in a pinch mustard might do.

Sexy Trickster

I saw that
sexy trickster
talking you out of
a trip to Duluth

you were making poems
out of spare parts
waiting for all the right
and passionate verbs

needed a disastrous love
affair to finish
your first novel.

-- James Evans

Gorham, ME

carpenter's helper

the rattling was so bad it
damn near scared the
shit out
"these 'ere innernationals ain't
like they useta be"
old man butland grinned through
his cigar and
gunned her more pressing the
pedal right down
stiff-legged and
chawing his cigar so hard
he was like to eat it and
then he grabbed it out again and

grinned his grizzled yellow
teeth and
me sitting froze-like and
white knuckled and
feeling sick
"these ole' innationals 'ere do
awright straight out, eh?"

captain america incognito

at first i thought he looked like
captain america not because he
was big and bold and beautiful with
a dazzling uniform to match but
ironic-like in his u.s. air force
blue jacket with one lonely stripe and
a set of bulky ear phones hanging about
his neck and scrubby unshaven face
(he looked lean and hungry) and
spectacles with snap on shades and
one of those skinny western neckties
with a turquoise indian clasp and
as he prodded about the patio chairs
he asked to see a chaise rocker and
continued prodding with this strange
looking extendable aluminum cane that
i just wouldn't trust (thinking of a
hidden collapsable sword) and he fiddled
with an old am-fm-short-band (his fingers
moved rapidly in quick nervous jerks)
radio that hung over his neck down to
his hip and had what looked like
a microphone attached so i wondered
if he was tape recording too as
i showed him the two rockers we sold
and he kicked at them with his penny
loafers to make them rock while pointing
out with his cane that wooden rockers
are better and last longer than aluminum
and i began to feel uncomfortable and
so left him standing there and soon
got busy and never noticed him leave.

alpha beta peach

i ate it again
each time the
last one lingering
always picking the
softest and giving
it a deep sniff and

firm rub between my
hands before biting
into its sweet flesh
and enjoying the
fuzzy skin too and
sucking the stone
until only sticky
fingers remained so
i'd toss it into
the alpha beta
grocery bag that
i used for trash
and go and rinse
my fingers off.

-- leo mailman

Long Beach, CA

sometimes
a man must be
in one place
long enough
to plant himself in
to take root and
grow
and know
where he is

San Francisco From a Cable Car

on
the san francisco cable cars
i sat next to
a man and a woman
who pressed
their mouths together to keep
each other from
the san francisco night

while
in the corner of the car
a girl stood with the dark staring
out of herself
and for a moment our eyes
met and i thought
maybe she was looking for
san francisco too

but
just then this guy
walks right up
to her and puts his arm around

her and they both laugh
as the car bumps to
a stop.

later
in my room i write
a postcard to a friend back
east about the broads out here

'bout how they just can't get enough

Poem For Kenneth Patchen (1911-1972)

you died a simple poet
on the last page of Time magazine
and i read it twice thinking
about the guy who earns
his living summing
up people's lives making it
all sound so easy
then i go to the bookcase pull
out a book of your
poems turning
each page becomes
a breath the phone is ringing
is ringing some guy
wants to order a pizza
i tell him i'm busy raising
a poet from the dead he
says "shove it pal"
and hangs up so
i hang up walking back
to where i left
the book is still
lying spread eagled on the table
like a corpse i
notice that it's spine is
broken next
to the book is the copy
of Time with
howard hughes smiling on
the cover and
i wonder when i die if
they'll put me on
the back page of Time and
whose smiling face
they will choose
to mark my
grave

-- Richard Immersi

Bloomington, IN

SPIRIT OF THE 49-ERS

BY CHARLES STETLER



Reflection

my mother and father were the first
people I know to hold honesty sessions

every saturday night
when he came home smashed

policy of the house

karl, my friend, caught the crabs.
such a scrappy bunch, he admired,
then grew accustomed to their ways.
he enjoys a nip himself;
they seemed to thrive on Kwell shampoo.

however, this new relationship
appeared potentially bad for business.
a bar owner, he shakes many hands.
during one prolongish clasp,
he spied one cosmopolitan little devil
do a Fosberry Flop, from forearm to forearm.

karl's first thought: miniature rat guards.
then he found the perfect cure,
strapped a flea collar on each wrist.
business is back to normal.

The Rough Beast Slouches Toward Bethlehem

I keep having the same dream.

I'm in Morry of Naples, my
favorite liquor emporium, and
no matter where I look -- on
bottles of wine, beer, vodka, gin,
bourbon, scotch, blends; on half
gallons, quarts, pints, and splits,
the same label. Caution:
The surgeon general has determined
that drinking is fatal to your health.

The cheese counter is padlocked.
You need a note from Blue Cross
to buy a case of beer.
Above the carbonated beverage locker
hangs a poster where a dentist brand-
ishes a Seven-Up, points to other brews:
"This and these will gum you up."
Clerks are working out their residence,
stethoscopes about their necks.
A heart specialist sits on call.

Stavrogin: The Double or Nothing

"If Stavrogin has faith, he does not believe that he has faith. If he hasn't faith, he does not believe that he hasn't."

-- Fyodor Dostoyevsky: The Possessed

If opposites attract that could explain the kinship that I feel, but I'm not sure they do. I could never look into the muzzle of a pistol and let some irate fool take three shots at me without a nervous breakdown, return of fire, or headlong dash like Danny Kaye behind an oak. I could never marry a cripple or even someone with a warty nose for self sacrifice or money let alone a whim.

And, needless to say, I could never hang myself without the trembles and the fear of pain and death and maybe God. But you knew Kirilov's forty tons of rock could only crush, not hurt. Not me.

I'm afraid you're what Satan's all about, a heart that pumps at always the same speed and only blood.

I don't have your strength;

I can't twist an arm.

But I can stand aside, like you, and watch myself manipulate affections.

Then aware of seeming too much mind

I'll retreat and wear my heart upon a sleeve yet always careful

it doesn't get a bump or bruise.

I'd like to give but usually can't.

At least they thought you were possessed which means something had you in its power.

The joke was

that something else was always you.

The horror is

I don't seem mad.

I've got all the fear you never had but it's all centered on myself.

The reason I'm afraid we are alike:

the only thing that matters is my song.

a toast

here's to nick and nora charles,
pioneer hedonists who brightened the way
out of our grim cotton mather past.

they won where many stout revelers succumbed:
f. scott, zelda, hemingway, and crews gallantly
pursued the gin-filled grail until
john calvin, not john barleycorn, completely broke them.

but the pox of collective guilt and deprived man
could not daunt the thin man and his wife.
she, in genuine liberation, poured as they drank
for breakfast, lunch, and supper
without a single belch of shame.
nor did they ever start the day
stabbed with remorse or headache pledges.
nick usually set the morning tone:
"how about a drop to cut the phlegm?"

they loved life, each other, all the pleasures
of the flesh, despite Salem's fire and brimstone,
and Asta stands as wagging proof that
they were just alive, and not rebelling.
nora always slept with nick, not the dog,
and all three remained completely non-neurotic.

To Ellen

Dear Claudia. this is a love note written to you
with my golf pencil because i cherish you most
for your fairway grace, for always allowing me
to play through, for never ruling out of bounds
my Laker games, though you don't dig a Hairston pick;
endless repeats of Shane, High Noon, and One-Eyed Jacks;
bridge, where i follow my own convention;
flash floods of beer and pool at the 49-er.

no other woman -- only a lady -- ever gave her man
a lifetime membership to his own private club
where there is just membership for one.

to gerry locklin, at age thirty

poet of perversity! you know how important it is to die in your twenties, but you refused for the same reason you won't comb your hair or wash your levis -- somebody once said you ought to.

granted, you're more than you pretend to be: the desert-booted barrymore of the 49-er tavern, outpinballing Tommy, seeing beyond Tiresias, towering over trivia, in whispered understatement to a court of wide-eyed blonds, all tan and 22.

but O, gerry, why 30?

don't you remember any of the dialog from On The Waterfront? you could've been a somebody. don't you know '30' is newspaper lingo for 'the end'? don't you know what lies ahead? i, a tattered coat of 43, will tell you. women will coo they like older men. they mean about 24, as it was with Zelda Sayre. expect to pick up more crepuscular chicks. these kids are not just emperors of ice cream. and from here on in every athlete will seem to be dying young.

but since you even stopped smoking to go on living, let's rewrite together a pearl or two from Satchel Paige: (1) keep looking back. you won't like where you're going anyway. (2) when in doubt, for counsel seek out ezra brooks. ponce de leon never had a bourbon named after him!

Speed Kills

karl is a friend of mine. to get all A's and open up his world through great books he enrolled in E. Wood's speed read school.

the results were more than he expected. with hand palm-up on page he whirled like the wind through The Old Man and the Sea in eight, The Pearl in three minutes; Animal Farm took but a single revolution. and there's much that lingers on: DiMaggio, bonespur, apple core, or was it albacore? but the course touched him elsewhere too: balling he sounds like a riveter. listen? no more. he can only speed hear. drinking, as you might imagine, has become a problem. did he, like Santiago, go out too far?

Occupational Hazard

Joe's a vendor at the Forum. He's at all the big ones -- Wilt against Jabbar, the Kings versus Bobby Orr, Frazier stalking Ali --

but he never sees head-on a Jerry West steal and drive, an Esposito save, or a Peggy Fleming thigh. His back's always turned to the main event.

True, he can cull the stats from the morning Times but his job's affecting the rest of his life. At the dinner table he eats over his shoulder. At the movies he sits with his back to the screen. While his wife says it's added mystery to their sex life, she understandably won't let him drive the car. No one can sneak up on him from behind, but he's woefully vulnerable from the front.

if you answer "yes" to more than three

rickie is a friend of mine. about thirty, he's never had a job. this doesn't bother him except for the guilt he feels about not feeling guilty. recently, however, he learned about others not so unbeset, and decided to lend a helping hand. he formed his own AA -- Ambitions Anonymous.

now anytime a happy hippie/hobo feels the urge to shine his shoe or any of a thousand snake-like symptoms that could turn to job he can hurry up dial rickie who promises if not instant at least lasting relief from any and all success anxieties:

don't panic,
smoke a number, watch TV, take a nap, a red;
let's drink some beer, shoot some pool.

no one is as effective as he who teaches by example and has a firm belief in his calling.

WARNING!

I'm aiming a shot glass right at the wobbly

logic of Alcoholics Anonymous

with their bloodshot question:

"do you ever NEED a drink?"

To them, dependence is weakness.

Well, here's a few things I rely on:

the commode and my bowels, this typewriter;

eyes, hair, and disc brakes. California Edison,

the Lakers, cheese and wine, also Marlon Brando.

Not to mention sex.

What AA really means is

if it feels good, it's bad;

pleasure's out, denial's in.

However, before we all take the bridge

remember the grandfather in The Rievers! He never

threw off the covers until he downed three fingers

of sour mash. Of course, he only grew old and wise.

Then there was Elizabeth Taylor, spoiled and filthy rich

in Heartbreak in E Flat, offering up champagne

in orange juice hors d'oeuvred with her soft porcelain body

for brunch. Should her hungry violinist have said "nay"?

Here's some other examples:

Sunday I slept til the kickoff, flicked on the Rams

for breakfast, munched a salami on rye

with hot mustard. If that doesn't call for a beer

let me slip my arms into the backward jacket.

And how about the guy on the 12-8?

If he has a snort after work

he's doing dangerous boozing in the morning.

But if he takes an AA-sanctioned evening belt,

he'll probably lose his job.

I have a friend who gave up smoking and drinking

15 years ago. He's been screaming as therapy ever since.

Tell me, what's the difference between

antibiotics daily at 12 to stop a snuffle

or a cancer and a tumbler of bourbon at one

to drive away the Fear?

I don't like you, AA. You'd never recommend

the hair of the dog. You want us to slay

the dragon with a noodle. Even St. George had a sword.

Total abstinence is your only creed. You would

have denied me a gulp yesterday when I tried to

assemble my kid's bike with four parts missing.
Then the bedroom cupboard door fell off.
Doesn't everybody need a drink in this world
where everything's breaking down and there's no repairmen?

The Booster Shot

some days the morning eye opener
at home just won't do the trick.
you have to go to a bar.

of the drinks you make yourself, the worst
are full of desperate introspection,
and the best lack all understanding.

the comments by today's barkeep prove my point.
pouring my second double gimlet
in five minutes he said, like sherlock holmes,
"this is for therapeutic reasons, i assume.
i'm a stinger man myself."

then we exchanged some easy bar talk
on the Rams and the races.
two gimlets more, shored up, i left.

"see ya, doc, thanks for the medicine."

arf, said Sandy

roger is a friend of mine. it was his idea
that we train a dog our way. reach out
to pet him, he snaps your hand in two.
offer some gaines or a doggie treat, he
cowers in terror. lift up a folded newspaper,
he licks your hand. say "heel" and he
dashes into the street. old people can
pull his fur, tug his ears; but he will not
let a child touch him. he scratches at the
door to come in and leak against the coffee
table leg. he wags his tail at mailmen,
burglars, and nazi uniforms; snarls at his
owner. he runs away when he is called. sits
up when a stick is thrown. hides his leash,
has to be dragged outdoors for a walk.

we figure: why should a dog be different?

-- Charles Stetler

Long Beach, CA

The Last Poetry Reading

was up north.

I had a drink on the plane

and landed at the airport, 2 p.m.

6 hours until the reading,

the lady at the travel agency hadn't known her schedules

there had been a plane every 90 minutes;

it was too late.

I was supposed to meet a lady in red pants.

it was 25 or 30 miles to the college.

I had a drink, scotch and water while standing up

at the bar downstairs.

then I went upstairs to the bar and had a bottle of imported

beer, sitting down.

when I went downstairs the lady in red pants was having me

paged.

she was the professor's wife and she taught high school.

the professor had a 3 o'clock class.

we drove off to a bar and waited for the professor.

she was buying and the talk was easy.

the professor came in and got on the scotch and water.

I stayed on the beer. "I've got to warble," I told them.

we drank until 7, then the professor said, "We ought to eat," and I said, "hell, I'm not hungry, I've got to warble, I'd rather beer up for the last hour."

they said all right and we got to the reading a little after

8.

I was lucky. after reading a couple of poems I noticed

a water pitcher and a glass sitting there

and I had a drink of water and commented upon its

soullessness. a student walked up and gave me half a bottle

of good wine. I thanked him, had a drink, and went onto the

next poem. so this is how they killed Dylan Thomas?

I thought.

well, they won't get me. I need just enough for the rent,

the beer and the horses.

I got through the reading and the next thing I knew I was in

a houseful of hippies. they passed money for wine and we all

got wine and sat around on the floor and talked. it was a

little dull but not bad.

then I was back at the professor's house

sitting up with him and sharing a 5th of whiskey.

his wife had to get up at 6:30 p.m. for her high school

duties.

so just the 2 of us drank, we talked a little about literature,

but more about life and women and things that had happened

to us. it wasn't a bad night.

I slept on the downstairs couch.

in the morning I got up and had 2 alka seltzers and a coffee.

I took the professor's dog for a long walk through the woods.

there were trees everywhere. those people had it made.

I came back and waited on the professor. luckily he didn't have any classes that day.

I watched him. I knew what he was doing was wrong: a glass of milk and a large bowl of grape punch. I watched him while he drank it and listened to him in the bathroom while he gave it back.

"what you need," I told him, "is a half glass of beer in a half a glass of tomato juice."

"it was a good reading," he said.

"never mind the reading."

"you said you wanted to catch the 11:30 out of the airport. I don't know if I can drive."

"I'll drive."

she had the new car and he had the old one with the clutch. it was fun learning to use the clutch again.

I stopped twice along the road while the professor vomited. then we stopped at a gas station and had a 7-Up.

"it was a good reading."

"never mind the reading."

the professor drank 2 more 7-Ups.

"you shouldn't do that."

I waited while he vomited again.

then he suggested that we ought to have breakfast.

"breakfast?" I said. "jesus."

well, we stopped and I ordered sausage and eggs and he ordered ham and eggs, plus milk and grapefruit juice.

"don't drink that milk and grapefruit juice," I told him.

he drank it. then I waited while he ran outside.

I ate the sausage and eggs and potatoes and toast and drank my coffee. then I ate his ham and eggs and potatoes and toast and drank his coffee.

I drove on into the airport, thanked him for all, and walked into the bar. I had a tomato juice and beer. then I had a plain beer. I just got on the plane when it took off. even the stewardesses didn't look as phoney as usual. I ordered a scotch and water and when the stewardess brought it to me she leaned her body all over me and didn't even smile.

I found one of the cigars I had stolen from the professor and leaned back and lit it with a studied flourish. I sipped at my drink and looked out the window at the clouds and the

mountains and I remembered the factories and the slaughterhouses and the railroad track gangs, I remembered all the dumpy 2 bit slave jobs, the low salaries, the fear, the hatred, the tiredness ...

so this is what killed Dylan Thomas? I thought, sipping at my drink.

bring on the next reading.

-- Charles Bukowski

Los Angeles, CA

Morte D'Arthur

When my cousin Arthur was alive
he drove two Mercedes and a Lancia
had an extra woman in Short Hills
smoked opium hash in a gold pipe
wore a Cuban cigar to my father's funeral
was a friend of Duffy the Lark
and ate mountains of fresh strawberries and yellow cream
in February at the head table in L'Overture's,
washing the mess down with Moet.

Now that my cousin Arthur is dead
he lives with his mother's glaucoma,
packs machinestamped hamburgers
in the Jiffy Meal factory in Hoboken,
masturbates in bus terminals,
squeezes pimples
and sits staring at his hands.

He knows that he is dead when he cuts himself
and he bleeds.

Zeno's Arrow

couldn't move, occupied
an infinity of points --
stationary at each --
or never passed them.
Either way,
motion is illusion.
The way to disprove his point
is to wing an arrow
to his heart.

The parrot fish, more subtle,
lives in a tawdry world
of coral and sharks.
Coral slowly builds it atolls,
sharks are "the perfect predatory machines."
Therefore the parrot fish
develops his nutcracker beak
with which he browses the coral
and when ingested
by the prehistoric corporations of sharks
gnaws his way through their bellies
to freedom.

Let us not discourse on change,
but on the beautiful motions:
the arrows in their numerous trajectories,
the parrot fish in their jukebox cascades
of gold and blue and arsenic green,
not one identical to the other,
all of them seemingly satisfied,
not one of them argumentative.

9 Ways to Have a Good Time in Pittsburgh

attend an "over 21" dance at the Webster Hall Hotel

listen to Archibald MacLeish read at the International
Poetry Forum

walk around the Stephen Foster Memorial

read the entertainment section of The New York Times

see the steelmills at night two nights in a row
two nights in a row

walk around Mellon Square

walk the other way around Mellon Square

take a taxi thru the suburbs of Weirton, McKee's Rocks,
Millvale, Blawnox, Etna, Rankin, Homestead,
Dravosburg, Beltzhoover, and Aspinwall

guess which the Monangehela River?
and which
the Allegheny?

Some Places the Mobil Oil Map
Lists as "Points of Interest in Pittsburgh"

Allegheny County Work House
Central Beagle Club
Filtration Plant
Gumbert School for Girls
International Order of Odd Fellows'
Widows and Orphans Home
Mayview State Hospital
Pittsburgh Bible Institute
St. Paul's Orphanage
Scout Center (Flag Plaza)
U. S. Steel Corporation
Ward Home for Children
Western Penitentiary
Wilkinsburg Gun Club

-- Ed Ochester

Pittsburgh, PA

there is something he doesn't have

some part missing which he
refuses or is unable to identify
in fact his almost total concern
is to keep us from that knowledge
it keeps him in constant
motion like someone in a cold
room lying on a bed
with one blanket and that
blanket too short so now
the feet are out now the
shoulders and always some
-thing is shivering

the eastern poets visit us

with small smiles and
unsure how to move in the loose
clothes lightweight and un-
-constricting self-conscious about
their forearms exposed to the sun
but smiling or their mouths
pulled into little o's
like fish out of their natural
element
they are marvelous!
i see their spines
like barbed wire bending a little
growing suddenly a profusion
of plants all meant
for friends back east
their spines sprout yucca
they grow yellow acacia
their fingers turn into green
dwarf cacti there is
eucalyptus jacaranda
and always no no
they are ophelias floating
in the stream of their dying
weaving exotic weeds
about themselves making
themselves into little spectaculars
what else can they do?

-- gerda penfold

Echo Park, CA

The Feeding

A few catch their food in mid-air.
Some find it
scattered on the sand.
Some fight for it
beating out with their wings
slashing with their beaks.

Two brown paper sacks
warm with the sun
empty.

Sizes

My hand is five times
bigger than yours.
I let you grab
hold of it.
Pull and put each
finger in your mouth.
Suck. Five nipples.
Five big sticks.

The dog whines.
Paws at the back door.
Stretches his hunger
halfway up the screen.
You watch him jump
at a moth playing
just beyond his
jaws.

The Left Side of the Mural

the genius of this
part of the painting is
she enters him
and
 still remains
 herself

she standing up behind
he sitting down
before her

almost without effort
her left leg
enters through his shoulder
runs across his chest
and stomach
like a dark blade
or a second
spine

reappears
 further down
 still herself
a leg and a foot
for her to stand on
and wait

The moth is twice
as big as
one of your eyes.
See. It is half
the size of
your hand.

-- Lynn Shoemaker

Ithaca, NY

*

The water lifted :lakes
are holy, this shore
was suited for a ruin :temples

dismantled from above
each carved pillar aches :each lantern
still pursues that heavy arch

--all is following

all pilgrims slow their tour through here
our lake
filled with coins :identical pails
bandaged with plywood :my house

is moving. Each street lamp
needs repair. The stoop
ashes. Come, let us

climb this hill, rise
with wood :leaves
lifted --our bed
is following :dry, dark, bare.

*

I separate in lobbies, each hall
watering its rooms with keys and ferns
the stream
cold except where sharks have eaten --birds
piers! ships aflame at harbor :each staircase

sorts my legs, my baggage too
detaches, my arms
escape as chairs, knobs, a wall, the narrow rug
coiling, a muddied stalk
exhausted at my opened door --I bloom

in pieces :the bed
my heart unfolding.

-- Simon Perchik

New York, NY

Uncle Eddy

Uncle Eddy was handsome
& wild,
drank & smoked,
got medals and trophies
for running,
married a beauty queen.

Uncle Eddy
scattered laughter
like star dust
wherever he went,
did not let Death
suck his heels.

Uncle Eddy made you be
daring.

Uncle Eddy would take me
in his strong arms
& toss me to the sky,
catch me
with the wind blowing
my hair
& the sun
all over us.

Uncle Eddy came home
one Christmas
& went out on the town
& drove into
a steel pillar
of the Jamaica El
at 60 miles an hour.

Uncle Eddy was handsome
& wild
& did not let Death
suck his heels.

Fingernails In Spring

Sometimes I go crazy
with a hunger
or a desire
or something
that sends me to the ice box
20 times in succession,
makes me light
cigarette after terrible-tasting
cigarette,

makes me drink
4,5,6 cups of coffee,
then 4,5,6 cans of beer,
makes me pace from
room to room
picking up this book
or that object,
touching and probing
and tasting like a
blind man
searching for some
clue
of where he's at ...

And sometimes
I settle for cutting
my fingernails
that grow like new flowers
in spring,
impatient to be free ...

Aunt Ruth

When she was young,
she ran away with a man,
it was years ago,
she was stately
& well-educated
& stayed in the hotel room
for three weeks
before he left her.

Her stepfather
locked her in the attic
for a month when she returned,
& when she came down
she was a school teacher,
married a humble man
of Hungarian descent,
settled like concrete
in New England.

I never really knew her
till I was 18,
I was in the back of the car
defending people I knew
nothing about,
defending Beatniks
& the way they lived,
it was 1950 something-or-other,
Aunt Ruth was driving,
her knuckles white

where she gripped the wheel,
her face muscles twitching
like swimmer's cramps.
Our eyes met in the rearview mirror
& I shut up.

"They have no right,"
she said,
"They have no right to live
that way."

I found it hard to answer.

To All Who Would Know

-- a primer for Mel Lyman

I could tell you tales of broken nose
& twinkle toes
& non-chalant acceptance,

but rather let me say
that there is a hole in my kitchen wall
instead of my wife's face,
& I beat my child upon occasion
because of his existence;

and I drink to excess when I drink,
which is quite often ...

Margie & Arlene

lived just a few sand lots away,
were older than I was,
came by to play.

We'd go to the woods
& smoke,
I guess they were Tom Boys,
no one gave it much thought,
we'd smoke cigarettes
& show each other our things,
play doctor.

Once I broke Margie's head
pulling her on a sledge,
I remember running from the pond,
remember the puddle of blood that

shot rivulets thru the crusty snow,
the whole pond scarlet with Margie's blood
& me to blame.

Arlene was always smiling,
grew up to run away
with a cowboy
from the rodeo,
gave up the church
& said everything was
shit.

A family of misfits,
no one to lean on
not even each other,
dying in Brooklyn
& in silence,
a terror in their eyes
that no one cared enough
to see.

I Do Protest

Like time in the vice
Of man's ingenuity
And stars reduced
To chemics,
I protest.

I weep the rage of childless mothers,
Impatient to be full,
And I inhabit the focal point
Of sadness.

I protest the human mind
And I fear the loneliness of constellations.

The wind blows mellow and fog-grey
Through my limbo.

Cheyenne Friend

Bobby Bennett
was my best friend
we'd sneak out
at 2 a.m.
once his mother caught me
up against the hallway wall
we lived in what I guess
was a slum
a Cheyenne Mexican slum
a project
big blocks of building
with sandpaper walls.

Sleeping over
I worked a mouthful
of bubble gum
into Bobby's hair
so that his mother
took him for treatments
I'd sit in the warm sun
skipping rocks
& wait for their return
each time he had to go.

Bobby couldn't cope
they'd say now
once I set him up
for a fight with Barok
the skinniest bully
in the world
got him to say
he could beat Barok
in stomach boxing
had to praise his
hard stomach
to the moon
he only said it once
reluctantly
Barok & all his friends
sprang out of hiding
sprang out of nowhere
& Barok knocked all the wind
out of my best friend.

There was Cub Scouts
& run away
movies & bikes
but always Bobby
got the short end
of the stick.

I don't know why
we were friends.
I guess because
we had the same
last name.

-- John Bennett

Redwood City, CA

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CLASSICS:::

Ian Hamilton Finlay -- An Illustrated Essay (Stephen Bann) \$3 fm. Wild Hawthorn Press, Stonypath, Dunsyre, Lanark, Scotland ¶ Gerald Locklin's Poop, And Other Poems fm. MAG Press, 3802 La Jara, Long Beach, CA 90805. ¶ Winning Hearts And Minds, war poems by Vietnam veterans edit. by L. Rottman, J. Barry & Basil T. Paquet, \$1.95 fm. First Casualty Press, P.O. Box 518, Coventry, CT 06238. ¶ More good experiments fm. Poetry Newsletter: Number (ed) Book; Black & White Book 1; The 5¢ Scarlet Ink Book 1, Book 2, Book 3, Book 4; and Ladderbook Piece (Wally Depew) \$1/per fm. 819 17th St., Sacramento, CA 95814. ¶

VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::

David Solway's Paximalia fm. Fiddlehead, Dept. English, Univ. New Brunswick, N.B., Canada. ¶ Lyn Lifshin's Moving By Touch \$1.50 fm. Cotyledon, Rt. 4, Box 276, Traverse City, MI 49684. ¶ Holy Doors, anthology edit. Wm. J. Robson, \$3 fm. P.O. Box 5580, Long Beach, CA 90805. ¶ Fielding Dawson's The Dream/Thunder Road \$4, Paul Blackburn's Early Selected Y Mas \$4, Robt. Creeley's Listen \$3, Tom Clark's Smack, Stephen Stepanchev's The Mad Bomber \$4 fm. Black Sparrow Press, P.O. Box 25603, Los Angeles, CA 90025 -- also releases Michael Palmer's Blake's Newton \$3. ¶ E.S. Miller's Selected Poems \$1.95 fm. Open Places, Box 2085, Stephens College, Columbia, MO 65201. ¶ Wm. Kloefkorn's Alvin Turner As Farmer \$1.25 and Contemporary Chilean Poetry (edit. Edward Oliphant) \$1 fm. Road Runner Press, Box 149, Univ. Wisconsin, Oshkosh, WI 54901 -- also releases Salvatore Farinella's Hunger/First Poems 75¢. ¶

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LITTLE PRESS NOTES:::~::~:

Latest broadsides fm. Alternative Press, 4339 Avery, Detroit MI 48208 are: Untitled (James Humphrey), Listen To The Cricket Under This Dry Wood (R.X. Massa), To You In Your Bad Time From Me In Mine (Donna Brook), Final Blues (Harley Elliott) -- also a classic "object": Wounded Teabag (Dayton Spence). ¶ Now fm. Unity Press, P.O. Box 26350, San Francisco, CA 94126; Stephen Levine's Lovebeast: A Parable \$2.50 Armando Busick's Pages From A Tree \$2.25 and Azul Zangpo's Joyous Man \$2.22. ¶ Be sure to get the catalog of and patronize the most distinguished and effective Canadian publishers now on the scene: The Coach House Press, 401(rear) Huron St., Toronto 181, Canada. ¶

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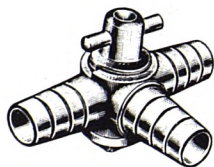
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