

or that small businesses would lease space for arts and crafts authentic as the vanished sea bass?

i wishy-washily will make the best of things:
tanqueray martinis, yachts beyond my means,
and women that may not be.
i will be happy at the happy hour.

across the river and into the bullpen

i.

after the midterm we were drinking
in the tavern and this one young man
who had missed a number of questions
kept going from table to table challenging

everyone to a chug-a-lug contest.
when all of us declined, he said,
"there's not a man among you,
not a drinker in the place."

we shrugged and sipped our beers,
while he threw back first one,
then two, then three, then four
straight eight-ounce mugs in rapid fire succession.

the next time i looked up, i could discern
him through the back door standing among
the tall goldenrod of the deserted lot, violently puking.
stetler and lindsay were holding his head.

ii.

later, another of the lads began to feel his oats.
he loudly announced that the real poets of our age
were the pop musicians, and that he knew more
about david bowie than i about plath or bukowski.

he was having trouble enunciating, however,
so he finally quit talking and began to get it on
with the girl sitting next to him. from time to
time, he'd leer my way to make sure

i was properly impressed with love among the
undergraduates. what he didn't realize was that
i'd fucked the same girl two years before, as had
half the male population west of the san gabriel river.

i had to run off to my seven o'clock class.
when i returned, the girl was there, but alone.

"where's kenny?" i asked. "in his car," she replied.
"what's he doing there?" "he's passed out," she giggled.

iii.

eventually someone had to get on my ass about hemingway. papa, do you realize what we go through on your behalf, those of us who love you? how anyone who wants to get our goats invariably uses you as a pretext?

this guy was saying, "hemingway was a latent homosexual," so i said, "look, there's no such thing as a latent homosexual,

there are people who perform homosexual actions, with greater or lesser frequency and proficiency,

and there are people who don't. hemingway didn't. otherwise, symptomatically, you can classify anyone you want as queer, either because he loved his mother or because he didn't, or he never got laid or he got

laid too much, or he likes athletics or he doesn't, or he dominates his women or they whip his ass, or he does or doesn't go around calling people latent homosexuals."

"well," he said, "i'm still convinced i'm right." i wasn't surprised. people of few ideas are generally addicted to them. but, for christ's sake, earnest,

what with fending off your imitators and detractors, there's hardly time left in the day to wipe one's ass.

it's getting harder all the time
to keep things sorted out

i've got a pardner who's bi-sexual.
he's a little guy, bird-thin, jockey-high,
with shining eyes of celtic blue,
a sly smile, and the gift of gab.
he's also a more-than-promising playwright,
an avid sports-fan, a pretty fair shot at pool,
and a cosmopolite: he's swung both ways
in paris, london, l.a., and The Apple.
having known a lot of famous people,
more than a few of them carnally, i suspect,
he's a great raconteur,
he's always a kick to tie one on with.