

because she goes drinking beer on her lunchhour
instead of sticking around to trade stories

concerning the contact who insisted
she had made no long distance call
to any city known as
"total."

automation may be a blessing in disguise.

bobby fisher

i don't like anyone who kicks a guy
when he's down, and the europeans were
exultant when he went behind 0-2.
their press excoriated him

as vain, aggressive, jejune, materialistic,
a typically arrogant american
to be contrasted with the obedient and undemanding russian
(who incidentally had had things his own way for years).

yeah, they exhausted the pejorative entries of roget's,
and i'll admit i got a little nervous
that he might be cracking up, steaming in a
pressure cooker of his own devising.

but when he showed up for the third game
i knew everything was going to be all right.
the european press has vietnam on the front page again.
but where is j.d. salinger to chronicle this newest glass?

on the present state of affairs in dixie

i.

jim smith is just back from
tuscaloosa, alabama, his home town.
he says the favorite conversation
piece is still the recently dead.
he was regaled on several occasions
with the one about the kid whose
motorcycle collided with a diesel
truck and he had been one
hundred sixty pounds, but all the
pieces they could gather in a sack
just barely inched the scales to 86.

ii.

at chucker's bar the local motorcycle rats line up their beers and scowl a lot. everyone mocks them openly. the story goes that they went out with chains to whup a seventy-year-old recluse and he put ten of them in the hospital. the tuscaloosa bikers don't scare nobody -- they're good for laughs is all.

iii.

things are a bit behind the times in tuscaloosa. the flower children still hate blacks. by dope the kids mean dr. pepper. the college newspaper has just begun to satirize the president. a poll shows 38% of the students oppose the war in vietnam. the women's libbers are demanding a sadie hawkins dance. a historian, in protest against the treaty of versailles, has emigrated to paree.

iv.

jim smith is an engineer at north american. he has hair half-way down his back, but wore a short-hair wig to the job interview. he must be one helluvanengineer because they haven't fired him. he's also a helluva pool player, a helluva guy. quiet, introspective, he has recently begun analysis. he says it's difficult, being from tuscaloosa. he complains particularly of a sense of deja vu.

to our leader

look, i know you don't like football, but the sport has its instructional, its edifying side. some players, for instance, especially in the waning afternoons of their careers, become what is known as cheap-shot artists.

these are the guys who have lost a step in quickness, and the rookies have begun to overtake them, and sometimes they have lost their nerve as well -- they can't come head-on anymore.