

a letter to mike and lyn

my friends, do you remember how obese  
i grew this summer,  
dining copiously with you in bad kreuznach  
on beer, wine, and sausages, potato salad,  
wine,  
and beer?

and do you remember how i pledged  
that i would lose that weight on my return?  
i think i mentioned three-mile runs each morning.  
i think i said that i would send you  
a shapshot of my depleted waistline.

well, i did run three miles one morning,  
but that very afternoon i read about  
a plane crash in alaska.  
it seems the only victim to survive  
was a fat man.  
the others either starved or couldn't stand the cold.

and on another page i read about  
the food shortage that threatens us,  
and, on another, how our money ain't worth shit.  
and it occurred to me  
that soon enough we'll all be on a diet,  
not from choice but from necessity,  
and when the cold winds blow,  
and there's no gas with which to light the fire,  
a bit of meat upon the bones will be a comfort.

enclosed you will not find the promised "after" photograph.  
i've put on five more pounds since my return.

the good old days

we were necking in my birdshit volkswagen  
in the fifty-cent lot across from the campus.  
she was a willowy blonde with a skirt  
that slipped easily up above her dark pantyhose.  
she looked about eighteen, but was actually twenty-seven  
with three kids and ten years of marriage beneath her belt.

she didn't want to do it on a first date,  
but still, coming up for air,  
she said, with an air of great sophistication,  
"god, i feel like we're back in high school."  
"what was wrong with high school?" i said.

Then, because as it turned out she had misplaced her  
car-keys,  
we had to go back to the school  
to search for them, and, finally, to call her husband  
to come pick her up.  
i was very drunk, very very very drunk,  
and i insisted on holding her hand  
in front of the indifferent janitors  
and on feeling her up  
while she was on the phone to her old man.  
"holding hands," she said;  
"jesus, i haven't held hands with anyone since high school."  
"what was so bad about high school?" i said.

back in the parking lot, i knew i should hightail  
it out of there, but, drunk as i was,  
and so taken with her old-young sensuality,  
i dallied to make protestations of a burgeoning affection.

"jesus christ." she said, "i haven't ..."  
"yeah," i said, "i know: you haven't had anything  
so gauche said to you since high school."

it was at that point that her husband's datsun  
(she was driving the lincoln)  
burst upon us in the nearly empty lot.  
she leapt from the v.w. and i tore ass  
(as we said in high school)  
out of there,  
checking in my rear-view mirror to make sure  
homicide was not about to be committed upon her  
or, worse yet, me,  
and recalling, from the prelapsarian recesses,  
a few of the things that were bad about high school.

an anti-semite for a saturday

i was getting a little work done for once on a saturday  
afternoon in the office when, sure enough, hartz,  
the guy from the office across the hall, had to  
appear in the doorway.

"awful quiet around here today," he said.

"yeah," i said, "it's a nice change."

"how can you work without a little background noise?"

"i don't know," i said, "but i can."

"quiet as a tomb," he said. "i have to have a little  
background noise."