

MARLBORO COUNTRY

Rick Strause always measures problems out in smokes.
An eight ball bank is "a fresh ciggy shot."
Straight-ins are just a puff.
Six clubs is a Tijuana Small,
seven hearts rates a Roi-Tah.
Dogs are useless on three pack nights.

This translates quite readily
into grander smoke rings.
Burton and Taylor took their last drag.
Kissinger just lit up a fresh one
who looks like she has a long way to go.
Muhammed Ali could stand a hit or two.
When last seen, Nixon was shopping in Virginia
for a wholesale deal with Liggett & Myers.

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

my wife had claus and acrophobia
so for therapy we went
milling around in angry mobs
until she was ready for the acid test:
department stores at Christmas clearance
and back to school specials.

weekends were devoted to ferris wheels,
cookouts on Needle Rock, a season's pass
on the Palm Springs cable car.

the cure took. for pleasure rides
she takes the Santa Ana Freeway at 5 pm.
her strolls are on a tightrope over
the Grand Canyon and Niagara Falls.
She's mailed Evel Knievel a challenge.

the only problem is I'm scared to leave
my room, step off a curb,
or climb a flight of steps.

A MANY SPLENDORED THING

Love is never having to say you're sorry,
says Erich Segal, Ryan O'Neal, and Ali McGraw.
What do they know?
Love is KISSING ASS, says Roger Corbin,
an existential Ovid,
far ahead, and well behind, his time.

This Don Juan of the derriere maintains
kissing ass is good for the soul,
it cleanses the mind:
"you know exactly where your head is."

To kiss or not to kiss is not the question.
Thou shalt kiss ass if you want to get any.
Show me a man who won't kiss ass
and I'll show you a man on the brink
or headed for a shrink.
Roger speaks with tongue akimbo
puckering up for the job at hand.

His girl says "we enjoy doing things together."
Roger translates that:
"I kiss her ass. It's that simple."
He wanted to see "Deep Throat."
They settled for "The Great Gatsby."
"I'll kiss Gatsby's ass if that's what it takes,
although I'd prefer Mia Farrow's.
Line 'em up, I'll kiss 'em.
The lower you go the higher you fly.
I can kiss ass with the best.
I even do impressions. I kiss her ass
like Steve McQueen, Omar Sharif, or Charles Boyer.
My Burt Lancaster really knocks her out.
I really get my teeth into that one.
I've never met an ass I didn't like.
There's no such thing as a bad ass.
Sighted ass, kissed same.
I kiss 'em because they're there."

WORLD'S FARE

from dollars to T-shirts
we're living in a world
where all things shrink.

it's vital that you buy
every item two sizes too big:
reputation, sausage, honor,
beef rib eye, incredulity.

unfortunately we're all stuck
with what's between our legs.

THE PROFESSIONAL

The unwary dealers in Vegas
have no idea he is headed their way.
Cigaret between his lips, snap brim
hat back on his head, he smirks
all the way from Riverside to Barstow.