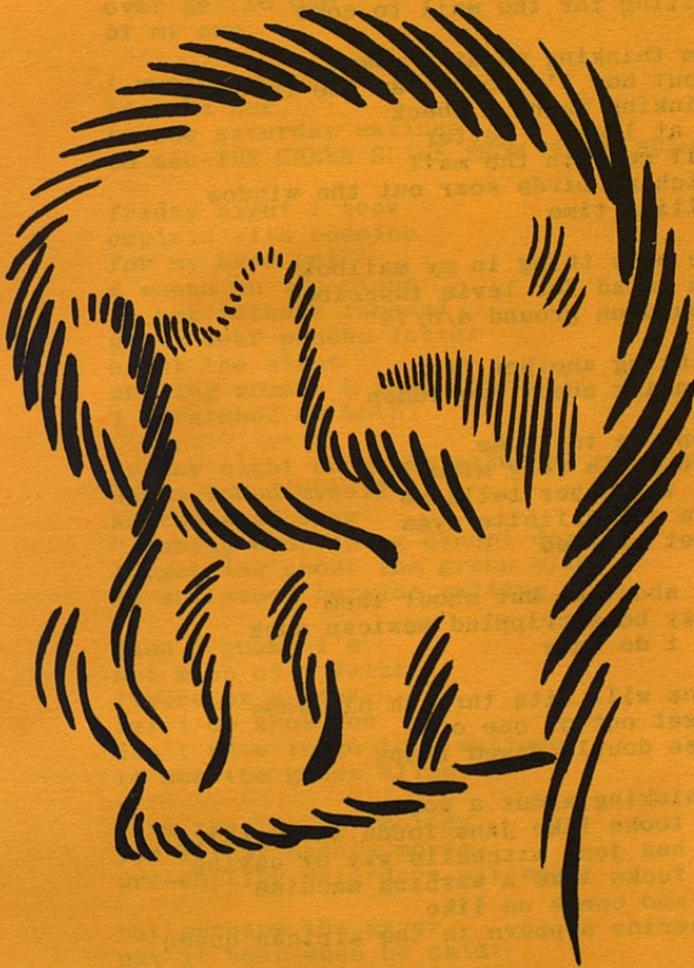


THE BURNING FIRE CHIEF



KIRK ROBERTSON

2 WOMEN: FOUND ON GROUND 4/6/74

sitting with a beer
waiting for the mail to come

i'm thinking about a woman
about how i'm gonna pay the rent
thinking maybe a check
or at least a letter
will come in the mail
watching birds soar out the window
killing time

the only thing in my mailbox
was an ad for levis inscribed
"found on ground 4/6/74"

drinking another beer
thinking about two women

when one tells me
i've got a foxy mind
and the other tells me
i've got infinite eyes
i get worried

not about me but about them
i may be a crippled mexican duck
but i do know

a fox will bite through his knee
to get out of one of
those double jawed traps

& thinking about a woman
who looks like jane fonda in anything
who has joni mitchells way of saying
who fucks like a washing machine
and who comes on like
katherine hepburn in the african queen

keeps my mind free of those traps
my eyes on the finite

DANA

she's not exactly my kid
she's my wifes
by somebody else
but she's probably
as close as i'll
ever get to one
of my own.

i was supposed
to take her
to the saturday matinee
to see THE GREEN SLIME FROM OUTER SPACE.

friday night i took
empirin with codeine
for my knee put
a woman on the plane
to her fathers funeral
got a dear pancho letter
spent the night
chasing women & the eight-ball
i scratched on both.

friday night hungover saturday morning
and i found myself
as the toad says
"fearing everything except death"
forgetting about the green slime
as she stood outside waiting.

dana i guess i'm
not much of a father
figure or a poet
but i do know you
don't have to go to a matinee
to see the green slime.

this then as an apology
for friday nights movie
pre-empting saturdays matinee.

but perhaps the mayor
put it best when he said:
you always wait until
i'm most vulnerable
& most defensive.

THE FIRE

burn 'em,
i said.

she had the past
trunks & boxes
of love letters to
everyone and
from everyone too,
photos of fucking
this one
& that one.

burn 'em,
i said.

i can't do that,
she said.

well, well,
i said
striking a match
lighting
a cigarette

well, well.

SHE CALLS ME WEIRD BUT

i once called her
the most beautiful woman
i almost ever saw
& she wants me
to write her a love poem

we were only together
three weeks before
she fucked somebody else
& she wants me
to write her a love poem

she writes me
notes about it everybody
else gets notes
too
& she wants me
to write her a love poem

she wants me
to write her a love poem
& i guess this is
about the best i can
do right now
& still she wants me
to write her a love poem

love poems
like the late worm usually
miss
the bird entirely

FAHRENHEIT 451 AT -22 DEGREES

it's cold outside
frozen stiff as i
watch a movie
about burning books

it's cold outside
on highway 93
a cattle truck roars by

it's cold outside
& the fire chief says on TV
there's nothing there
for peace of mind
we burn it
the only way to be happy
is for everyone to be made
alike

it's cold outside
i could use some
of that heat
she says
pointing at the TV screen
i'm going to bed

it's cold outside
on highway 93
they have turned off
the EAT sign

it's cold outside
but on TV
camus dostoevski the bedroom
& even the fire chief
are going up in flames

it's cold outside
frozen stiff as i
look at the bookshelves
& the thermostat
and wonder if i am to die
in the first snows of winter

or if
as that old japanese soldier said
coming out of hiding
30 years after VJ day
"What difference does it make?"

SEDIMENTARY POPCORN



LOOK, EVEN IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE, TRY TO DESCRIBE THE PLACE TO ME...

A MAN IN YOUR POSITION SHOULD BE SEEKING ESCAPE-- NOT USELESS INFORMATION.



NOT B.A.R.

--AND YER JEST PLAIN COCK-EYED!

YEAH, I'M JEST A COCK-EYED OPTIMIST--



RAVEEKA WORK POEMS

-- from notes by nila northSun

i

we all just sat around
it's a small office
3 secretaries
and the manager the rest
of the company
consists
of tattooed laborers
everybody quit
work early that day

we all just sat around
the boss came in
told a few jokes

we all just sat around
with styrofoam cups
in hand
on folding chairs
drinking
jimbeam
smirnoff
or jose cuervo

we all just sat around
merry xmas

ii

working has made me
appreciate lunch
the time allotted
to consume it

she had
a hamburger i had
the "espresso lunch"
pizza slice one
meatball spaghetti garlic
bread & zucchini

the allotted time
has been consumed
and i
feel i would like to

throw up
my "espresso lunch" as
she reminds me

i paid \$1.98
for it i guess

i'll hang onto
it
& the job
a bit longer

A LITTLE GROUCHY

she sulks off to the bedroom
pissed
oh is she pissed
about what i
don't know.

walking in
beer & cigarette in hand
i inquire

what's your problem?
i say
what's wrong?
you
she says
are a grouch.

why
i say
do you think
i am?
i guess
she says it's just
your nature.

walking back out
the TV news tells
me writing
is on its way
out.

she tells me
it's my nature
they tell me
it's on the way out.

NIPPLES & OTHER BEDTIME STORIES

lying in bed reading
a poem about
santa claus coming
down from the mountain

when she says
can you suck on
my nipple
it itches & i just can't
go to sleep

sucking in bed dropping
the book as
my cock stiffens
coming with santa claus
on the floor

i think i can
go to sleep
now
she says

i begin reading
a poem about
a round trip to peru
on a motorcycle

but i soon
forget about it
& fall asleep
with the light on

5:30 NEWS

they ask the winos
if they're worried:

"i think it's a woman,
she dresses like a man."

"i don't sleep out no more,
you betcha."

"you only gotta die once,
god takes care of me."

they ask the police
if there are clues.
the police are worried.
they say:

"we know it's a person
who carries a knife."

they ask the winos
if they're worried
about the future:

"what future?"

7 dead winos
with their throats cut,
in 6 weeks.
in LA,
"the slasher" is loose
on CBS news.

ON THE EQUINOX & UNDER THE VOLCANO

while she reads adelle davis
i watch the black scorpions
from under the volcano
attempt to devour mexico, 1957.

it's been with us 4 months now
& she's getting fat.
a pot belly,
like mine from drinking beer,
but something she can't
get rid of
by sucking it in.

and i don't know

what she's sucking in,
i mean it could be
one or the other,
son or daughter.

not that it matters.

what i notice
is she's getting fat.

this is what you wanted,
she says.

i suppose it is.

but, i don't know

was all i could say
when she asked me,
will eating watermelon seeds
make me pregnant?

but i figure if ramos, hank, & juanita
can make it past
those giant scorpions
then the 3 of us stand a chance.

but i don't know

what lurks out there
in the shadows
or under the volcano.

A DISCUSSION CONCERNING LODGING

he's the big indian
trader. he's also an
ex-smoker.
you should have
seen it
he says.

the car was bent double
she had been cut
in half dead
instantly.

the guy with her
so drunk
he's sitting on her
(he doesn't say which half)
asking for a cigarette.

an old lady walks
in
with something
to sell.

i know you're an indian
she says
you give me same
when i'm drunk
when i'm sober.

as she leaves
he looks back
at me
& my cigarette
and says
your rent is due.

-- kirk robertson

Nice CA & Missoula MT