

10.

There must be a difference  
between lover and love,  
a heart supposedly designates  
the volunteer  
though none step forward.  
Squadrons disembark  
without returning,  
only the 'ace' keeps tally  
by painting minute vaginas  
on his groin parts.

11.

If my mother knew  
how I lived,  
she would toss in her grave  
she would scream  
but then again,  
I would suppose labor pains  
are a bit much to handle.  
Republican Momma  
Richard Nixon supporter to the end,  
having me and Jimmy Carter  
with which to contend.

12.

Kant said he could do it  
though philosophy still remains  
un-marketable for mass populations.  
Where is the slick plastic logo,  
so accustomed to,  
where are the titanium road side stands  
from which we can buy these things?  
Kant was a crazy man,  
someone better to avoid,  
he hangs around with weirdos  
Nietzsche, Sartre, Hume,  
to name a few.

-- Jason Goodman

Upwey, Victoria, Australia

THE ROOM I SIT IN HAS BEEN EMPTIED

Despite the alarm, I remain in the seat  
I have been assigned, busily carving. My  
knife takes out the wood easily, creating  
the small letters, the alphabet sequence  
I once memorized. I am not as simple as  
I may seem; I do not carve the traditional  
initials or obscene message. The flourishes

I add to the G and F are the only clues I leave. No one will notice my subtlety, my feeble desire to be caught. My carving is a time capsule staple, an archaeological discovery. With such responsibility I must be careful. If the others return before I finish I must ignore their distractions. If they do not return at all I must carry my work to a safe place, guarding it from the flames or high water.

#### SHOES

I am wearing these shoes too much, I know. They cling to me as if longing for a heaven I might provide. When I sleep they muddy the sheets, causing my wife anguish. She does not recognize their desperate faith, sees only the tenacious nuisance. When I reach for her she is disturbed; her legs are covered with bruises. If questioned, she explains about frequent low tables and corners of beds. My shoes harass her, disliking her embarrassment. Winter is coming; already the slush drips onto the sheets. Each night when I remove the shoes I believe I will leave them on the floor. Each night I remove my socks and put the shoes back on. I cannot leave them; they nearly sigh when our skins touch. They are happy, I know, and I am happy as well, feeling their warmth in the night.

#### STEAK DINNER

A dog stands at attention.

Some master beckons, expecting an answer.

The bone offered is eaten by an intruder who runs toothless to safety, sweeping all crumbs with the speed of his tail.

It is a vacuum growing naturally that threatens. It is an order ignored that brings the shocked look to the unwary.