

I liked the distinguished librarians
who stared classically at one
when you coughed or spoke too loudly,
and even though they were like my parents
they were not.

now I no longer read those I once liked
but it's good to think about them.
I like photographs of Hart Crane and Caresse
Crosby at Chantilly, 1929
or photographs of D.H. Lawrence and Frieda
sunning at Le Moulin, 1928.

I like Andre Malraux in his flying outfit
with a kitten on his chest
I like photos of Artaud in the madhouse
Picasso at the beach with his strong legs
and his hairless head, and then there's
D.H. milking that cow.
and Aldous at Saltwood Castle, Kent, August
1963.

I like to think about these people
they brought me other things than my parents
brought me,
and they brought them to me well,
very well
when it was so much needed
they brought me other things
that I never knew were there.
those friends
deeper than blood
who
when there was no chance
gave me one.

AN OLD JOCKEY

when you no longer see them on the programs
you figure they have retired
but it's not always so.
sometimes the women or bad investments
or drink or drugs
don't let them.
I see them down at Caliente
on bad mounts
vying against the flashy Mexican boys
or you see them at the county fair bullrings
dashing for clearance on that first hairpin
turn.

it's like the old-time fighters with once-names
being fed to the rising small-town heroes.

I was in Phoenix this one afternoon
and people were talking and chattering and talking
and I borrowed the lady's car
and drove down to the track.

I had a fair day.
then in the last race
this jock brought in a longshot:
\$48.40 and I looked at the program:
R.Y.

so that's what happened to him?
when he wheeled his mount up outside the winner's
circle he shook his whip in the air
just like he used to do at Hollypark and Anita.
it was like seeing the dead
reborn:
old R.Y.
riding 3 pounds overweight and still able to
create the magic.

I hadn't even noticed his name
in that \$3,500 claiming race
or I would have put a small
sentimental bet on him
on his only mount of the day.

you can have your New Year's
your birthdays
your xmases
your 4th. of July's.

driving back in
I felt very good for R.Y.

when I got back in they were still
chatting and talking and chatting
and the lady looked up and said,
"well, how did you do?"
and I said, "I had a lucky day."
and she said, "it's about time."
and she was right.

A LITTLE SUN

the whores at the All-American Burger
sit in the patio
laughing at 2:30 in the afternoon.
they have finished eating
and 2 of them are drinking coffee.
the 3rd drinks a coke through a straw.