

He knows loss is a matter of adjustment.
He fondly recalls each body part discarded,
Each vital organ given away.

The pounds lost dieting,
The pancreas sent to Paraguay,
The larynx bestowed upon the mute soprano.

Now his eyes,
Without corneas, without retinas,
ask to give you something, anything

But don't ask for his heart.
He will give you anything,
Anything, that is, that he has left.

-- Peter Woolson

Ithaca NY

THINGS TO DO WITH A WOMAN: #2 THE LAUNDRY

You need two women for this.

After soaking your clothes
in biodegradable soap for 24 hrs.
find a nice stream
close to your back door:
make sure it's clear and cold.

Place the two women face-to-face
in the water.

Husk each one
naked to the waist and dunk them.
Give one your first load.

Be certain the water cascades
over their heads
that they resemble boulders.

While one sits idle her duds
clustered like kelp on her lap
the other proceeds to whang
her load over her partner's head.

When she's done the other
repeats the process all afternoon
until the job gets finished.

Before any of this feed them
eggplant and granola after give

them wedges of the best
cheese you can lay your hands
on plus mugs of chamomile tea.
With proper care and maintenance
they can keep you
in clean clothing year round.

PIQUE

I found Him just outside Andys Eats in Dubuque. "Ok,"
He said. "Make it short. I haven't got all day."

"Right," I replied. "So what's black, white, and read
all over?"

He looked pissed. "Everything."

"Hey, that's not the right answer."

"Sure it is. Take a look."

And sure enough. Houses. Sky. People. You name it.
Three colors everywhere.

Moral: Never monkey with a god out to lunch in Iowa.

THE GANGSTERS

at the undergraduate poets reading
the graduate poets sit in the dark
like hit men from the Eastern Slicks.
the first girl up tells of her woes
and perishes in a hail of rhetoric.
the second rises to speak tragically
of obesity and impotent men.
she slips on a careless word
vanishing into a well of pity.
but the last girl walks on
and suddenly lifts
her skirt over her head.
the audience is stunned.
the gangsters are speechless.
the reading goes on in a dream.

-- Paul H. Cook

Tempe AZ