

to keep it covered up
forever in five rows.

My father called it
The Match Game because
he played it, a match
in his teeth, with matches
in the kitchens of members
of his congregation.
I think he must have learned it
from the horse trader who
was trying to get right with God
the week he died.

The world is everything
that is the case. One night
after playing with guests
on a straight-backed chair
in our living room, my father
explained it to me. Don't
try to figure it out. You
can't. The most educated
people are the easiest to
fool. There are only two
winning combinations --
2-2 and 1-1-1 --
and it's just a matter
of working into them.
He showed me.

My father used to try to hide
the game. He wouldn't play too
long, he'd play with several
people at a time, he'd chatter, he'd
occasionally play wrong and risk
losing. I tried to give the game away.
Nobody watched what I did.
Jeff Nulle is the only person
I ever knew who figured it out,
and he did it alone
on the New York subway.

TAKE COTTON CANDY

Take heartfuls of cotton candy
taste of it smell it
play with it take it lightly
in your hands fluff with it
fluff with it and jab it
jab it into molds

put it under pressure
and squeeze it into bullets
squeeze it into bullets
and give these bullets to each other
gently and softly hand these
bullets back and forth
to each other looking each
other in the eyes gently rocking
exchanging bullets and
arrange the bullets into rows
and into squares and triangles
and booby traps
take huge handfuls of the candy
of each of your selves and
pick sweet clutchings of
each other and push those sweet
clutchings as much as you can
of each into molds of yourselves
put each other under pressure
turn yourselves entirely into bullets
and make as intricate
a bullet design of yourselves
as your substance can provide.

THE CIGARETTE GAME

You can't smoke all the time,
you can't smoke everywhere.
You can only have two cigarettes
at a time when they're passed out,
and you can't ever have matches.

Passing out cigarettes, five
times each day, is a long,
slow line to a cardboard box
where an orderly finds the pack
with your name on it. You get
two cigarettes from your pack.
To get another one, you have two
given to a friend who is cigaretteless
who gives you one back. He considers
this a favor. A bonanza is someone
who doesn't smoke who will give both
back, but there is the debt of his
standing and besides he'll probably
start smoking. There are supposed to be
ward cigarettes for those with none.
Ward cigarettes are passed out last,
often only one. Sometimes you can get