

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

your cigarettes and one or two extra plus, by ducking down and shoving your hand in, a ward cigarette. You are rich! What do you do with your cigarettes? Even one cigarette is subject to cadging for hits from every side. Your shirt pocket is the only place, and everybody reads shirt pockets expertly. You can smoke one and jam two behind your ears and brazen it out, but you don't want to. You don't stay rich long. Most of the time there are no ward cigarettes and that puts about a dozen on full-time bumming. So when you get a carton of Kools you trade a couple packs for shirts, etc. and you give two packs to the ward and get involved in the 2-1 game with two or three people and your carton is gone in two days.

A lit cigarette is well-being. You have succeeded, temporarily. You have friends and family: you are healthy, wealthy, and smoking. You have a burning cigarette in your hand. When you draw it makes your hand and face warm. You are making love to yourself.

These three inches. Yours. But here come the hits. Every kind of mouth. They draw hungrily. Their profuse thanks, if received, is more annoyance.

The happiest time of the day for me was after the evening meal when I had one cigarette that was for me. There was only one place to smoke it: the bathroom, stall next to the window. I got a light from an orderly and walked in and watched the sun go down in the west through the heavy screen on the window and pretended I had just put in a hard day on a farm and truly earned my keep and it had been a good day. I pulled my cigarette into myself, strong and slow, rewarding myself for my hard day.

(UNTITLED)

Dad your dying
made me remember
your bedtime story