

when we return to the warehouse,
the old guys sitting down with cups of
coffee in their hands notice our arrival,
smelling the lingering smoke and saying nothing.
these oldtimers with the thick skin of a rhino's hide
have known the pain.
they look the other way,
and in our silence
we know it's just a matter of time.

1/26/78
true love

the only one never to treat me shitty
remains in my room. she is there, always.
when i take her for granted (which is
often), she doesn't bitch or try to make me
feel guilty.
upon my arrival home from a typical sat. nite
bout with beer and tequila, no shrew-like screams
are waiting up for me, but instead,
soothing silence.
i also know that the fingerprints on her hips
are mine
and only mine.

and when i want to make love, there are never
any excuses as to why we can't,
and if i'm good, she gives me babies,
crisp and clean babies to be held up
to the dark nite sky ...
me a proud daddy passing out cigars.

but being the typical male that i am,
it is my fate never to be satisfied.
there's an ibm selectric in the display window
of a typewriter shop downtown. lately, when i
pass by, she winks or smiles at me.

and i have begun to take notice.

2/9/78
playing safe

loading a truck in the rain for 3 hrs.
had left me and carlos looking like a pair
of wet wharf-rats.
we were huddling around the coffee pot during
our break, shivering and wondering how it had

come to this.

the company's top salesman came out of the front office, walked past us and said, "gee, is it raining outside?"

carlos spat in disgust as the prick walked off, and i struggled to keep the "fuck you" on my lips from being too loud.

as we went back outside to finish the job, i remembered a gopher i had killed when i was 13 yrs. old. i had caught him above ground, and before i cut him in two with the hoe, i pounded him helpless with the high-pressure spray from our garden hose. often wondering what made me do it, i finally realized that all along i was afraid he'd bite back.

4/17/78
blondes

it wasn't the "forbidden fruit" syndrome that made me do it. instead, i like to think that it was a ruthless lust for gold, inherited from spanish ancestors who took it any way they could get it. the sound of metal slicing brown-skinned flesh became a song to be played without moral overtones.

so the 1st time i brought one home, the air of defeat in the living room was as thick as a dying bull's blood mixing with the arena dust.

to my left,
two pairs of brown eyes bled silently and projected forced smiles ... no questions asked.
to my right,
a pair of blue eyes, cold, uncut chunks of turquoise crystal stared through me ... waiting.

at that precise moment i heard the clamor of hispanic armor, and in the background,
the laughter of heartless men.