

BY THE PARALLEL BARS IN THE PARK

trying to wring death out  
of the bones  
get the blood pumping  
shirt off dripping away in  
the sun

& this old geeser comes up  
in a huge grey herringbone  
coat  
nearly screaming at me, "you  
kids are all alike," he says,  
"always trying to impress the  
ladies. me i've fucked them  
all. Lana Turner in the ass,  
nailed Marilyn & all she had  
on was a pair of red pumps,  
Rita Hayworth even Farrah  
Fawcett. you name em, i've  
fucked em. even that broad  
over there, screwed her about  
12 times." & he points to one  
of the mothers swinging her  
kid.

"as long as you've got a good  
hand, one good palm," he says,  
nearly sticking his claw in  
my face, "you can have anyone  
of them & never get your heart  
broken."

then he shuffles off stepping  
through one of the sand boxes  
taking a long look at one of  
the prettier women as he walks  
past.

MY 9 YR. OLD DAUGHTER ON A BAD DAY

first her body is falling apart  
at the seams  
an abrupt stomach attack in the  
middle of breakfast

her limp at full throttle & the  
near microscopic scratch on the  
side of her foot she shows me

later she tells me the sun is  
giving her a headache  
as though it didn't have enough to  
do pumping up watermelons &  
daisies

then it's the apocalyptic voice  
of doom & she just knows  
the store will be closed that  
has her favorite pastry  
her mom's gonna be pissed about  
her foot  
that puppies are eating cardboard  
on the streets of Manila

& i want to plug up all the holes  
whip out psychic band-aids  
potions, steaming herbs give her  
more than this hug  
& conversation

her eyes are big & blue & on the  
verge of puncture -- do you love me?  
they ask  
-- love you very much, i tell her

being a weekend father is very  
hard, i think as we head out of  
the park

being a weekend daughter must be  
equally as difficult.

#### 14 YEARS TOGETHER & OTHERWISE

"batten down the hatches," he says  
a huge swirling wave slapping  
through a porthole just inches  
from his head

"secure the anchor," she orders  
& they tie ropes to the children  
then with wild eyes she threatens  
to jump overboard  
but all she does is puke over the  
side instead  
then they both hug till the calm  
untie the children