

## TROUBLE

I had my camera and I took a shot through  
the shop window  
and a rather tall ugly lady  
neck bent forward  
ran out of the shop.

"what are you doing?"  
she asked,  
"what did you photograph?"

"I photographed the naked manikin,"  
I told her.

"I'd rather you didn't take any more  
photos," she said.

"all right," I said and I walked down  
the street with my camera  
with her staring after me.

I felt guilty and upset even though  
I had done nothing really  
improper.  
it usually happened to me  
at least once a day.

I turned, dropped to one knee  
focused, and photographed her.  
she waved her arms and screamed  
and I shot her again.

the trouble with these people is  
that their cities have never been  
bombed and their mothers have never  
been told to shut up.

## GETTING MY MONEY'S WORTH

the water was cold and filled with broken seaweed  
it looked strangely like little bits of broken shit  
and nobody went into the water  
and I told her,

"I'm going in. we drove one hundred and seventy miles  
to get here and we are paying \$30 a night for a motel room  
with a shower stall built for people 4 feet tall. I'm



going in ...."  
"not me," she said.  
I left her on her STAR WARS towel  
I entered the water  
it was full of small hard rocks  
I walked in chilled  
reaching down and splashing myself.  
then the first wave came and I dove under  
I could feel the bits of seaweed lashing against me  
it had been a great hurricane  
the best of the year  
as I stood up, an unbroken mass of seaweed wound  
about me.  
I broke from the tendrils  
turned and waved to her on the shore  
beckoning --  
come on in, chickenshit ...  
I turned in time to dive under the new  
breaker  
then I swam for ten or fifteen yards  
parallel to the shore.  
I turned again and waved her in --  
come on, show some guts!  
she waved me off --  
go on, be an asshole! not me!  
I leaped high  
breaking through and over the next wave.  
Del Mar was a fine place  
even though the racetrack was unlucky for me.  
as I settled down upon the ocean bottom  
my left foot stepped upon something soft  
which appeared to be living matter.  
I leaped away  
falling backwards into the water  
and the next wave passed over me.  
I rolled over and was carried toward the shore.  
I got up and walked through the broken seaweed  
pulling my trunks up.  
I walked over the rocks and onto the shore  
then up on the sand.  
"you didn't stay very long," she said.  
"I stepped on something out there, it seemed  
alive. I got the fuck out."  
"dry off and lay down," she said.  
"I'm going to shower. I've got to make the first  
race."  
"o.k.," she said, "I'll see you about the 5th.  
I want to get some sun."

I walked back to the motel and got under the  
4-foot shower. what had I stepped on? a dead  
fish? an eel?



I got out and dried off, selected my short-sleeved blue shirt  
tan pants  
loafers ...  
green bikini underwear ...

the good life of the California sportsman.

## SLAUGHTER

the first seven rows were roped off for The Counsellors of Exceptional Children, the Airport Group, and the German Society.

it was a Saturday at the track and they were all talking at once, standing up, sitting down, waving, laughing.

when the winner of the first race came by, most of them leaped up and down screaming and some of them hugged each other.

it was difficult to believe that they all had the same winner.

I tried to pick the Exceptional Children people from the Airport people and the German people  
but they all looked very much alike, and as each race went by they became quieter and quieter, and some of them vanished.

by the last race only about one-ninth of them remained and they looked very tired and very sad and said nothing. they had learned something: losing one's money was very much like death  
and although the horses were very beautiful, it was easier being with the German people or with the Exceptional Children and to fly about the country at reduced rates.

the racetrack was finally nothing to jump up and down about and to scream and hug each other about.  
it got dark and it got cold and the wind came off the Sierra Madres, and as they put them into the gate for the last race, even a winner couldn't cure them now: the jocks hustle from the gate in various colors as the machines have shut down, taking the last bite, freezing the odds forever.

the favorites don't win enough  
the longshots don't win enough  
the medium prices don't win enough