

DR. PEPPER

It was my idea to race. Jerry said, "Sure. Loser buys the Dr. Pepper." I stayed with him for a hundred yards. Then he pulled away. He got smaller and smaller. When he hit the hard road, I quit. Walked on in. He was already sitting on a stool with half a Dr. Pepper. When I reached for mine, it was a Pepsi. Sam said, "Sorry. We're all out of Dr. Pepper."

CHARLES

Charles was very interested in chemistry. He had a lot of beakers and chemicals and test-tubes in his basement. On Saturday mornings, he'd do experiments. I'd go over and watch. He'd pour, mix and stir. I'd look at the shimmer of orange and red and yellow. I didn't have a clue to what he was doing. I went every Saturday.

THE MOVIE

When I was eight, a girl named Amanda lived across the street. One Saturday we decided we wanted to go to the movies. I wanted to see Abbott and Costello. She wanted to see Astaire. We couldn't decide, so we flipped a coin. I won.

During Abbott and Costello's
antics, she laughed and
loved it, while I sulked
down in my seat, guilty we
hadn't gone to see Astaire.

THE BIGGEST KID

Barry was the biggest
kid on our block. He
never spoke to me. But
one Tuesday after school,
he came up to me with
Jerry and Will. "I hear
you got a Mickey Mantle."
"Well, I don't know." "Oh,
c'mon. Let's see the Mickey
Mantle." "Well." "I'll
give you a Marv Throneberry
for it." "Well." I looked
at Jerry. His eyes were
hard and shiny as marbles.
"OK." I handed Barry
the Mantle. He handed me
the Throneberry. He never
spoke to me again.

-- Robert Swanson

Davis CA

TO THE POINT

i don't like poetry
anymore than anyone else does
it was a bore in school
& for the most part
it still is
the sentimentality is gross
& after 13 years
i still don't know a damn thing
about the technical aspect of it
the only reason i chose this medium
is for its merciful brevity