

What are twenty yards of cloth  
and a few boards worth?  
But I can't make a couch,  
and we have no place for friends to sit.  
Elaine and I have fought for months  
without guests.  
Eddie asks, "You checked out the mall?  
We beat Dayton's. Hundred bucks.  
Same stuff exactly."  
He's right, but I can see  
he isn't happy.  
He wishes he had a department store  
so he could put his furniture  
in delicate make-believe rooms  
instead of shabby rows.  
Besides, the nice stores make better dough.  
Is it his fault  
he's Crazy Bargaining Eddie?  
He sits with me on an overstuffed green divan.  
He knows I want to buy and get out.  
But Elaine balks. These couches aren't right.  
She has dreamed of having one  
since she was a girl.  
They mean something  
I can't understand.  
"We've looked long enough," I say.  
Crazy Bargaining Eddie averts his eyes  
while Elaine agrees.

#### REMEMBERING THE TIDY TOWN LAUNDROMAT

Machinery has driven us bozo, that's clear.  
Why else would every house in this neighborhood  
have a washer-drier used just four hours a week?  
We all look normal enough, in our clean outfits,  
but we've lost the guts to wash together.  
I remember my old laundromat in Palo Alto.  
It was easy enough, I tell you,  
to learn not to put your hand  
in the SpeedQueen with the spastic agitator.  
Where else would I have met  
the nice old lady  
whose T-shirt read, "Sit on it!"  
Where else would I have learned  
the correct response to, "Cochino,  
deme todo su dinero, pronto!"  
And where else would I have become friends  
with the man with half a face.  
No more reaching under my chair  
to find a petrified village of chewing-gum.



No more notices of spaniels missing.  
Goodbye to the co-eds washing their underwear.  
Wrongly have I cut myself off  
from the dangerous and the grotesque  
and the merely sexual.  
Everybody where I live now  
is too proper, I say.  
Why can't we share our machines?

-- Hunt Hawkins

Tallahassee FL

PARKED

sitting in my car  
on Catalina Avenue in Redondo Beach  
I see a fellow of 19 or 20  
riding his bicycle upon the sidewalk.  
he wears sandals and blue shorts,  
slows down, stops, puts one foot down,  
sits upon his bicycle seat.  
it is 4:30 in the afternoon and  
he is tanned a deep and even tan,  
his yellow hair and mustache.  
his face is smooth  
unmarked by pain or experience.  
then something animates him  
and he pedals off.

another crosses the street,  
he must be 21,  
very large of chest, blond,  
blue-eyed, very tanned, wearing  
green shorts and sandals.  
it is a Tuesday afternoon.  
he stands a moment  
looking down the street.  
his face is the same as the  
other face:  
untried, without purpose.  
a long cigarette is in his mouth.  
he finally enters a liquor store,  
comes out a moment later  
holding a can of Bubble-Up.

these are the kind my parents wanted  
me to be  
the kind my country wanted me to  
be