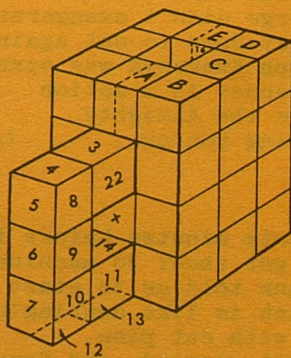
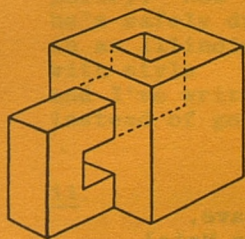
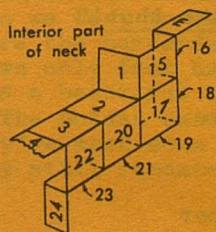


**JIM KLEIN'S**

# BLUE CHEVIES



Units 15-24  
make 1/2  
of neck





i.

I thought of Boon, Lion, and Old Ben  
fused into statuary in The Bear,  
a story by Wm. Faulkner  
and abreaction: the discharge  
of emotional energy supposed  
to be attached to a repressed idea,  
esp. by the conscious verbalization  
in the presence of a therapist.

My own way had been to take  
my therapy out into life  
and whip up a manic whirlpool  
sufficient to drive away all the safe people  
and attract the dangerous  
(including Terry  
who came from Bethlehem PA)  
and then to conduct a tournament  
until no one was left  
except Terry, Susan, and me.

\*

George called yesterday to say  
he had some bad news. For once  
George didn't exaggerate.  
I sat down to eat again.  
Ralph Krawczyk was spraypainting  
a fender in a motion  
like the Almighty  
wiping you out.

\*

Twenty minutes before it was time to leave,  
we got about 20 machines in from Clifton Metal.  
Frank told me to start cleaning them up with solvent  
which is like daubing out an elephant's asshole  
with cat piss.

I got started, and Gary saw me.  
"That a boy! Way to go!" he shouted.  
"I like a man who jumps right in like that!"  
I said, "Frank told me to,"  
but he didn't hear or didn't care  
or maybe I didn't even say it.  
The point is where does he get leave  
to speak in silver dollars?  
Gary signs the checks:  
and all of a sudden he likes a man  
who doesn't use too much toilet paper



who is comfortable working in 35° temperatures  
who knows what it means to work in a small shop  
a man who thrives on carcinogens like Gary does  
even if he won't die rich some day like Gary will.  
Truth is, Gary and Frank like a man  
who has something funny about him  
like being Puerto Rican or Black or young or old  
or even being an alcoholic ex-English professor  
or somebody Who Has Big Feet  
so they can call him Gunboats!  
And treat him like a pair of big shoes.

\*

Johnny giggled at dogs  
'cause they never take baths.  
Walking out of a restaurant one day  
Johnny threw his money away,  
then the guy the money struck  
beat him up  
and Johnny got busted  
for fighting. That was  
a giggle too.  
I was so square  
I never realized  
he had memorized  
all his extemporaneous  
poetry. Now  
he's safely drowned himself  
in an Illinois irrigation ditch  
with style  
and I've written a poem  
instead of going to his funeral.

ii.

We had stayed up all night.  
Terry went to sleep at 6:30 A.M.  
driving through the middle  
of downtown Passaic.  
We had a \$20 breakfast at Tommy's  
then we went to The Golden Bear  
where the bartender has a red beard  
grown only from hairs below his jawbone.  
It's a beautiful beard.  
In The Golden Bear  
they've seen some things.  
They still remember us.

\*

We're getting closer,  
I like his taste in music now.



He borrows a dime for the phone,  
we slap our hands together,  
he does it out of rhythm  
but we do it.

It's not enough tonight,  
I enclose one of his mitts  
between my two hands  
like a fluke in a bun.  
He bangs my two hands  
with a green tray.  
Not enough, we must bang  
our beer guts together,  
my 34" and his 56".  
It's so much fun to be babies.

He picks me off the floor,  
now I'm going to pick up Ronnie,  
necessary to bend my knees  
to get ahold of this maybe 260-lb. man.  
Surprisingly, I have him  
way off the floor,  
hold it a minute longer.  
This is a good trick,  
have to do it when girls are in here.

\*

She was glad to see me  
and gave me supper,  
we were butter and jam  
spread on her son,  
she told me more about his father  
than she ever told him.

There were black nailheads in the table,  
the tiny kitchen floor was uneven.

We talked across the corner  
of the table until midnight,  
she knew me as well  
as she knew her own sweatshirt,  
I answered like a duck call.

"I've read a lot of literature,"  
I said,  
"I've read a lot of literature  
and I think I know what  
you're offering me."

\*



We laid ourselves on the grass to dry,  
we made ourselves a (self-licking) pretzel,  
we became the rollers we passed through.

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we laid ourselves on the grass to dry.

iii.

Terry pulled on his gloves slowly,  
he began getting out of the car slowly,  
then he lunged back in  
and began lifting haymakers at me.  
I set my head dreaming on his sternum,  
Susan in the backseat went berserk,  
she drove this winner of hundreds of barfights  
halfway back across the sidewalk.

\*

My father told me once  
about a man who jumped out of a hayloft  
and caught his wedding ring  
on a nail  
and lost his finger.

\*

At potluck suppers my father used to  
pile up a plate with two slabs of meatloaf,  
scalloped potatoes, orange jello with  
carrots pineapple and walnuts in it,  
two black olives, carrot and celery sticks,  
three or four devilled eggs and  
a big yawn of chocolate cake and  
set it atop  
the fingertips of his right hand.

Then he'd fold it slowly back past his hip  
rotating it back slowly  
until it was past him  
going magically out over  
up past his shoulder  
still moving somehow all the way to  
back down and flat again.



No one else tried.  
The good people of Brookings  
probably thought  
you had to be clergy.

\*

My father is holding a football for me  
to kick with the wrong foot  
for a photographer  
on the front lawn of 908 5th Street  
Brookings SD  
in about three inches of dead leaves.

In Brookings his favorite joke was:  
"Why did the ram run over the cliff?"  
"He didn't see the ewe turn!"

He wore a big wide brown tie then  
with the links of a tan chain laid out  
and wound around and around.  
He'd start to tell that joke  
and I'd get bored  
and look at that beautiful tie,  
I didn't know what ewe meant.  
After a while I knew  
but I was still missing something.

iv.

Terry is the kind of guy  
when he hears about a fight  
he changes his shoes.  
Terry swung on Susan and spun  
on his heel and walked slowly  
to the bus stop  
and rode the public transportation grid  
to Washington DC.

\*

Men play pool the way they are.  
The way they thrust their butts out,  
the way they aim, then shoot and  
miss the 3-ball is so nakedly them.  
It'll be how they talk, shave  
and think: no doubt how they screw.  
Men playing pool the way they are.

\*



There is some kind of confused  
oedipal situation here.  
It's a costume party  
and everyone has come as himself.  
The hostess wearing a tux  
has just taken a flash picture  
up the dress of the passed-out host  
and detained me by the bed  
for just one kiss.  
I have consented, taking off  
my dark glasses but not my hat.  
The kiss is a goldfish on the windshield.

\*

Women are people who smoke.  
My wife smokes Kools,  
Susan smokes Parliaments,  
somebody else smokes Tarytons,  
somebody else Marlboros,  
and there is another brand  
I can't name.  
And when they come,  
they check the ash tray  
to see who's been here.

v.

When he hit her she fell backwards  
like a flat of stage scenery  
and would have hit her head on the curb  
had she not chosen  
in the choreography of the thing  
to land just above the knee  
of my right leg: the only part of me  
still sticking out from under the car:  
a leg she had once examined  
by an early morning light  
in a happier time  
and pronounced perfect.

\*

There is no doubt that Dr. Klein established a rapport with his students and, in fact, amused them with his passing comments. However, at times he interrupted himself in mid-thought and failed to return to his original point. As a result, some vagueness developed. Finally, since a formal lecture was not an appropriate part of Dr. Klein's presentation, a summary near the end of the period might have been useful to the students.



\*

Once upon a time there was an English professor who couldn't sleep with anyone but former students. He thought it was sick. They kept thinking he was smart and he wanted to be stupid. He wanted to be called Jimmy, but they called him Klein. He asked another professor, who had been a Marine and an advertising executive and whose knowledge of the world was greater than his, about his problem. "No problem," Terry said, "if you were in business, you'd be screwing the secretaries wouldn't you? At college there are co-eds so that's who you're screwing." At least he didn't sleep with A students. He felt very healthy about that; in fact, he had turned his car around and taken a girl home when he found he had mis-remembered her grade.

\*

These complaints are minor. The major problem rests with Professor Klein's lack of professional manner. He often makes jokes in class (e.g. Did you hear the joke about the English teachers who ran a whorehouse? They kept making the girls do it over and over until they got it right!). Comments of this nature are numerous. Professor Klein thinks little about making jokes in class pertaining to sex, and, at times, its relation to English (e.g. how disastrous it is to miss your period!).

vi.

I picked up passed-out Susan  
and carried her into a real estate office.  
Ladies from the beauty parlor  
were screaming at me.  
Maybe they thought I was Terry.  
The real estate agent began helping with Susan;  
he gave me a maroon baseball jacket  
for my torn shirt.  
It didn't do any good,  
the beauty-making ladies were screaming at me,  
the two cops unloading  
were like two freshmen,  
one walking toward me  
hand fluttering between his billy and his gun.

\*



Her husband, she's so embarrassed,  
she has to break in and tell him  
his thinking is so full of  
stereotypes -- not all black people  
believe in voodoo --

but he out of the blues,  
"Children shouldn't be spanked,  
they should have their fingers  
cut off and their parents should order  
Colonel Sanders fried chicken  
and give them the terrible time  
of fingerless  
fried chicken eating!"

\*

Driving with a beer bottle  
between her legs,  
she introduces them  
as two of the Olympic sprinters  
from Tennessee State.  
I light two cigarettes at once  
but the kissing in the backseat  
intrudes on us.  
One of them says, "You  
can't tell a book by its cover!"

Back at the softball game,  
Plummer and I sit  
in Plummer's Austin-Healey 3000  
with the case of warm beer  
and wait for them to lead us to the party  
in Shelbyville.  
As the men play softball under the lights,  
Plummer and I sit drinking warm beer  
and Plummer tells about the cornsilk pussies  
of pubescent blondes.

\*

If you're guilty, shut up.  
But if you're innocent, talk  
and keep talking and sometime  
it will make sense somehow  
because no one can invent  
a labyrinthine shawl of truth  
the way truth knits itself.

vii.



Terry was never arrested,  
in fact he came to my trial as my witness.  
We pretended we had been fighting over Susan.  
The Clifton cop testified  
that I had been barefoot, that  
there was an empty fifth of vodka in the car,  
and that I had threatened to kill him.

\*

I work as a poet in an attic room,  
there is a green rug,  
there is a telephone,  
there are four desks  
(mine and three empty).  
This is my office.

This room is in a house,  
which has become a college bldg.  
If anyone were so reckless as to ask,  
"Is there a doctor in the house?"  
on a good day he might get seven.

Sometimes I wonder:  
this is Rutherford,  
maybe WCW was once in this house --  
maybe he even lugged  
a box of Xmas decorations  
for a friend  
into this attic room  
where I am working.

\*

Did you know a backdoor window  
subject to a tapping forefinger  
tapping lightly, and even more lightly  
but slowly undergoing a significant internal change  
like a penis beginning to feel hopeful,  
tapping tapping lightly lightly lightly  
but actually striking harder and harder  
until a perfect circle of glass pops out:  
Did you know a backdoor window  
could have an idea like that?

\*

Man and daughter and dog  
clatter down into the stadium.  
He steps into the running  
awkward and blowsy, learning to breathe  
again, watching his daughter



and the dog; his awkward thoughts  
spin him around the track:  
here,  
this afternoon  
is all there is  
or ever will be.

viii.

Terry left for Paris today.  
Before leaving he gave me  
a yellow, an orange, a maroon,  
a tan, and two navy blue sweaters  
(one navy blue is v-neck,  
the other requires repair  
in the left armpit;  
I tried to buy the orange one  
for \$12 once  
but his wife wouldn't let him) --  
the Terry who visited me  
in Greystone one Sunday afternoon  
and got carried away singing  
with the man on the portable piano,  
this Terry has left me  
in charge of his affairs.

\*

Home by way of my office,  
past your house,  
your Chevy with a note  
on the windshield.

Until I loved you  
I never knew  
there were so many  
blue Chevies!

\*

The term "self-continuity" was not one of the  
writer's concepts when this study was begun.  
It emerged from recognition of what seemed to be  
lacking in these patients that the rest of us  
have -- the feeling of somehow going on in time  
-- the feeling of being essentially the same in-  
dividual as one was yesterday and will be tomorrow,  
but recognizing that one has changed since child-  
hood and may go on changing. This feeling is  
seldom put into words by any of us except possibly



when we fear the end of the self, as in death, but it is implicit in our looking back over the past and forward to the future. Our pasts and our futures are living realities to us, and the present often seems most significant, not for itself, but for the way it enables us or forces us to reach forward. Hence we want self-respect and self-enhancement. Hence we are concerned with the approval or disapproval of others.

Postlobotomy patients appear different from us and like each other in just this respect. They appear to lack (though in varying degrees, to be sure) any strong feeling of self-continuity.

It will be noted that the phrase used in the hypothesis is "capacity for the feeling of self-continuity," much as one would say, "capacity for the feeling of strong emotion." These capacities may be interrelated in some complex fashion.

\*

I got an electric train  
for Valentines.  
As it runs around the track,  
it makes a passing shadow  
on the lower walls of my bedroom.  
I let it run all night.

-- Jim Klein

Rutherford NJ