

owe at least a little to sartre,
although they are neither that simply
explained nor regretted.
and some of my existentialism was,
and i hope still is,
the genuine article.
i lecture once a semester to every class
on sartre's "existentialism is a humanism."
i'd give you the lecture right now,
but, what with declining enrollments,
i'd better hope you'll sign up and pay your tuition.

so sartre is dead now,
along with his vocabulary-world,
and the moral certainties of religion
are alive again and inhabiting the uncrowded humanities
building
(along with structure, necessity, and remedial comp.),
there is also talk, of course, of faculty salaries,
student evaluations, and the inevitability of layoffs.
i am among the loudest of the talkers,
because if i were ever laid-off
i wouldn't be able to afford
to mope around the deux magots --
i doubt i could even afford the polly maggoo anymore --
and moping is becoming a lost art anyhow.

jean-paul, they have cremated your feet,
at which i only metaphorically sat.
strangely enough, however,
my current metaphysical problem remains
whether i am capable of the freedom, the alienation,
responsibility, and angst,

of the either/or

of a marriage/dissolution.

D-DAY, 1980

coming out of the movie, "yanks,"
my little boy asks me,
"did we do something good
in the second world war?"

he's ten years old
and all he's ever heard of our military history
is napalm and radiation, washita
and the little big horn, cuba and
chile, and that george washington

had wooden teeth.
i suspect that it's not good for a little boy
to grow up hearing that his country's always wrong,
even if it usually has been.

this time i'm able to tell him,
"yes, the normandy invasion
was one of the greatest military operations
in history, and not only did we bring it off,
but it's good for the world that we did."

i grew up on "the sands of iwo jima;"
my son is growing up on "coming home."
what adjustments he is having to make!
what adjustments i've made!

ALSO, MY SHOES STILL COME UNTIED

the four of us were walking
along the street, when my girl broke out laughing.
"look!" she said, "chuck's steak house!"
i made the connection and smiled sheepishly.

but the other couple wanted to know
what the joke was,
so my girl told him how we'd been in this same town
a couple of years before

and this nice couple had pulled over
to ask directions to chuck's steak house
and i didn't have any idea where it was,
but i was in such a good mood

from the drinks we'd had together
that i gave them detailed directions anyway
which, as we later learned, must have taken them
several miles out of their way.

"well," the other guy remarked,
"i suppose you've matured since then?"

all my life i've been called immature
by parents, nuns, priests, coaches,
peers, wives, other women, not to mention
literally thousands of students,

and most recently by my kids,
as they reach the age of evaluation.
now i have to hear it
from a little-mag poet.