

it's my sixth child, and i've finally learned not to
fight it --

i let myself enjoy her.
so it's nobody's fault that we have so little time
to hear about each other's schools.

i wonder if she thinks my school is close to what it was
ten years ago when she was going there,
when girls, to my amazement and her rage, sometimes
pursued me.
i know how things have changed, but can she know it?

i don't know if we're growing very close
or very far apart.

SIX OF ONE

t.c. is a broker,
which isn't always a compliment,
but t.c.'s the sort of broker
who devotes the better part of each day
to horses, prizefights, pool, and such pursuits.
i've known him about fifteen years.
i can remember when he tried
to get me to invest in denny's restaurants.
i didn't have any money,
but even if i had
i wouldn't have bought into denny's with it
because i can't stand denny's hamburgers --
i much prefer bob's big boys.
t.c. used to get genuinely angry with me:
"gerry," he'd say, "don't you realize
that denny's charbroils their burgers,
while bob fries his?
fried food causes ulcers!"

and i am sure that fried food does,
but, unfortunately, there's been recent evidence
to suggest that charbroiling is linked to stomach cancer.

anyway, though, i ran into t.c. the other day
for the first time in a long time
at a kentucky derby party.
he didn't mention denny's,
which i must admit are now
on every other block in california,
and i must also admit
he was dressed in a lot more expensive threads
than my penny's jeans.

but we both had to admit
that we've had to cut back a lot on our drinking
because of the poor shape of our stomach linings.

GOLDIE GIRL

for weeks the very nice
and seemingly affectionate couple upstairs
had been regularly beating the shit
out of each other.

he'd be yelling, "you bitch,
you goddamn fucking bitch,"
and she'd be screaming,
"i swear to god if you hit me
one more time i'll get a gun
and shoot you right square
in the balls."

the whole neighborhood could hear them.
if one of them had actually killed the other
we would all have had trouble explaining to the police
why we didn't lift a finger to intervene
or call the cops.
the readers of the newspapers,
and perhaps, if the killing was sufficiently bizarre,
time magazine as well,
would never have understood that this was just one more
of the nightly seal beach marital, premarital,
extramarital, and antimarital quarrels.

but one night they finally did break up,
and they did it with a flair.
after the slammed doors, the flying objects,
and the broken windows, she wandered around
the neighborhood calling for her dog.
"goldie," she sing-songed, "i'm leaving, goldie ...
we're leaving ... come home, goldie, so you and i
can leave the fucker"

and he yelled down at her,
"you see, even the fucking dog
doesn't love your ass anymore!
no one loves you.
you're the world's most completely unloved person!"

and when she yelled back, "you'd better not
lay a hand on my plants,"