

such as wax the car. Wasting
time doesn't trouble me.

Right now
I am among the happiest and
most powerful of men.

LA STRADA

"Give the kids a bath, they're beginning
to smell," my wife had said. I didn't believe
such beautiful children could smell,
but I gave them a bath anyway.

After I got them to bed, I locked up
the house, brushed my teeth, put on
flannel pajamas, and went to bed myself
at 9:00.

It was a great extravagance, as I
usually stay up late, typing out poems
or catching up on correspondence, but
I felt I owed it to myself. I was
very tired, my entire body ached
with exhaustion. My liver ached,
my lungs ached. My heart was tired,
my neck was tired. My brain was burning.
Every part of me was weary.

I got in under the heavy quilts.
It felt good to be in bed on
such a cold night.

And I thought about a Fellini
film I had seen years ago. It's
a wonderfully melancholy work,
full of grotesque circus characters,
murder, and the tragedy and brutality
of life. The great actor,
Anthony Quinn, starred as an
itinerant strongman who performs
feats of strength for crowds in the streets,
traveling from town to town on his
three-wheeled motorcycle with a
gypsy wagon built on the back.

What a genius he was in that film.
Grumbling, ill tempered, fiercely
proud. A retarded girl tagged
along behind him, acting the clown and
playing her sad song on a trumpet.
She assisted in his performances,
but try as she might, she always
messed things up. And although
she made the audiences laugh,
she only infuriated Anthony Quinn.

Under the warm covers, I recalled
the sad tune she always played
on her trumpet, and how at
the end of the movie, the great
Anthony Quinn abandons her while
she sleeps on the side of the road. Soon,
however, he is haunted by the sad music
of her trumpet. He misses her intensely,
searches but cannot find her. And when
he learns that she is dead, he sits
on the beach and weeps to the heavens.
I slept for ten hours.

MAYBE IT'S THE RINSE CYCLE

She shrinks my shirts.
something happens
to the fabric
in the washing machine
and they come out of the dryer
a few sizes smaller
than they went in.

I'm sure it's not intentional,
still it's irritating as hell.
I have a closet packed tight
with tiny shirts I can't wear.
and they're always the best ones,
the newest, the best tailored,
my favorite colors,
the ones that really looked
great on me.

I'm always forgetting,
pulling a beautiful shirt
out of the closet, saying
"how come I never wear this one?"
then I try it on and
I remember: the sleeves
end half way up my arms,
my wrists hang out
awkwardly.

I'm going to take them
all out of the closet
tonight when I get home
and give them to the Goodwill.

The straight jacket I've
got on right now,
an early morning blunder,
should help to remind me.