

wr: 98 / watching

watching while
firemen dropped the river
under stone street bridge
for a guy who leaped
into the rock ~~that~~
~~of~~ a woman next
to me sd how she'd
seen him go & thought it
was really some kind
of ~~guy~~ prank because
he was laughing
~~the other~~
when he vaulted the
railing ~~so~~ what was so
funny she could see him
& his shadow out
lined against water ~~like~~ like / they were a
couple of twins &
whi been treated in
buying some of her art she
sd pulling a piece of
cardboard out from
under her coat in the
red light off a sign
can see the black
hair shed fasten on
it in the shape of a
floy

(you)

10/31/84

todd moore

watching

while firemen dragged the
river under state street
bridge for a guy who
leaped into the rock a
woman next to me sd she'd
seen him go & thought it
was some kind of prank
because he was laughing
when he vaulted the rail
what was so funny she
could see him & his
shadow outlined against
water like they were
dark twins & would i be
interested in buying
some of her art she asked
pulling a piece of card
board out from under her
coat in the red light
splashing off a squad car
i could see the black
hair she'd pasted on it
in the shape of a flag

Zodd Moore

stick

of dynamite will
harris stole from
a tool shed at
king's sand &
gravel didn't look
like much of any
thing he let me
touch & hold it
while we drove
past dog n suds
& starlite drive
in looking for
girls sd he'd
known guys
w/blown off
fingers because
they'd fucked
w/dynamite caps
but he knew what
he was doing
wasn't scared
out in front of
harlow's drugs
he had it shoved
down his pants
when he walked up
to sue wagner &
rubbed it on her
leg

aunt laura used

to buy beef hearts
for some kind of
pennsylvania dutch
stew that simmered
on her stove for
hours i remember
watching her bent
over the kitchen
sink scraping fat
off those thick
hearts then
quartering them
she was a big
balloon of a woman
w/her hair balled
into a severe bun
at the back of her
head she never
used perfume didn't
believe in it
smelled of armpit
& animal suet some
times when my
brother & i got
out of control
she'd storm into
the front room
waving her butcher
knife big chunks
of fat pasted to
her dress

nightshift

& it's another goddam
baloney sandwich
w/a slice of pickle
& a slice of carrot
on the side the
guy one machine over
is using his break
time to cut a knife
blade out of a steel
blank sez he isn't
sure if he's going to
jam it into his wife
& her fatass boy
friend or use it on
himself the foreman
claims he's sick &
is taking big chugs
from a cough syrup
bottle that smells a
lot like tennessee
sour mash everyone's
dreaming of hitting
the lottery which is
6 million plus rio
blondes bourbon &
steaks it's friday
3 in the morning
frieda from payroll
comes by w/the checks
the guy on number 2
cutter has clipped off
his thumb

a little test's

what mike gains called
taking 2 of his father's
handguns to the movies
i zipped the 32 inside my
jacket he stuffed the
45 underneath his coat
& we walked like gunmen
past frazer's used cars
while wind whipped &
snapped cheap plastic
flags above the chrome
lettinger's realty's where
we crossed the street
heading for the old
rialto & a bogart double
bill in treasure of
sierra madre where mexican
bandits are raiding the
train mike stuck his hand
inside his coat & sd
lets show bogie our badges

it was

one of those
little ceremonies
that happened
every time i went
over to harry
martin's house
his father wd
be sitting at the
dining room table
drinking as soon
as he saw me he'd
roll up his right
pant leg & show
me the place where
he shot himself
in a hunting
accident what do
you think of that
he'd say when he
bent his head down
his black hair wd
hang like welts
across the wound

pitching

hats at a coat
rack next to
the juke in
jimmy's 2 rivers
for drinks mike
kelly hits 2 out
of 3 w/his smashed
in stetson & i
can't get my john
deere hooked
even once finally
i just say fuckit
i quit while i'm
pulling a handful
of change out of
my pocket &
shoving it across
the bar in jimmy's
direction i ask
kelly what's yr
secret balance
something to do
w/flicking the
wrist the windup
what he holds
a shot glass up
to the light sez
rub it around
in yr lover's bush

liked telling how

he spent 45 of his best
years working as a
switchman for the u p
that was when there were
railroads he'd say now
all we got's a bunch
of crooked politicians &
some fucked up trains
would spend his days
making drawings of old
boxcars sometimes he'd
add a scruffy figure
or two to his windswept
yards then one night
while talking to archie
ross at the 10th street
crossing he suddenly
turned & walked into the
headlights of the east
bound freight

that

night
in front of
kahler's meat
market when
i put my
hand on
sandy mason's
snatch she
shot an awkward
right hook
into my ear
& bit me
on the cheek
so hard
it made blood
come now
whenever i get
a hardon
i can feel
her teeth

i lifted it
when Wayne ~~was~~ ^{Heeler} ~~was~~ ¹⁹¹¹
(ok) ~~used to~~

ran ^{down} beneath ^{the} ~~house~~ ^{air} ~~house~~

~~then~~ we'd go under at
the rose to his ~~place~~ ^{place} that the
place never had a basement

so we could ⁱⁿ any direction
be in the dark & see

daylight i always used a
stick to knock away spiders

& scare off snakes ~~if they~~
~~were~~ we crawled to

where we considered the
heart of the house was

i started trenching out a hole
wayne called his gold

mine ~~and~~ he was sure the
stuff was down there &

all we had to do was dig
for it the most i ever found

was an indian head penny
dated 1898 we had to

take turns sitting in ~~the~~ /hole it was so

~~small~~ wayne used to talk
about what he was going to

do when he got all that
money i didn't care if he

found gold or not i ~~just~~ ^{wasn't}
~~present~~ there to mine the dirt
down

1/3/85
①

crawling

w/wayne keeler
underneath his house
we'd go behind the
rose trellis the place
never had a basement
so we could head in
any direction be
in the dark & see day
light i always used
a stick to knock away
spiders & scare off
snakes we crawled to
where we considered
the heart of the house
was & started trenching
out a shallow hole
wayne called his gold
mine he was sure the
stuff was down there &
all we had to do was
dig the most i ever
found was an indian
head penny dated 1898
we had to take turns
sitting in the hole it
was so small wayne used
to talk about what he
was going to do when
he got all that money
i didn't care if he
found gold or not
i went down there to
mine the dark

watching billy collins

give eddy shelton
a hunting knife
w/a handle wrapped
in black masking
tape not to beat
him up shelton
stood there hefting
the knife for
balance & feel
& started passing
it back & forth
between his hands
the way buzz did
in rebel w/out
a cause then he
glanced over at me
& sd it's a piece
of shit isn't it
i nodded yes
collins sd it's all
i got shelton
touched collins'
t shirt w/the knife
point just about
where his heart wd
be & sd yeah

the way

that fire got started
was bill arneson &
his brother ed were
throwing matches
on each other's clothes
in the bedroom the
curtains went first
then all those comics
they'd stacked against
the wall by the time
they got the guts
to tell their mother
the room was blowing
fire out the window
bill sd he pretended
to be upset but it
made him laugh inside
to see those flames
shooting thru the roof
sd he waited a couple
days for the place
to cool off before
sneaking out of his
aunt's house w/his bed
roll what he did was
go back to that
scorched shell &
kick burned trash out
of the way so he could
sleep in the ashes

steiner complained

so much about the
wart growing on the
back of his girl
friend's right hand
that she reached
inside his coat for
the straight razor
he kept there &
whacked it off be-
fore he could say
anything she picked
the wart off the
table ate it &
washed it down w/a
slug of his whiskey
when he sd why'd
you do that she
wiped the blood on
his coat

when the state
theater ticket
girl was
working i'd
always
get in free
half an
hour later
she'd go
on break sneak
back &
show me her
tits i
liked the
way they
got streaked
w/light
off joan
crawford or
barbara stanwyk's
face

~~Little~~ ^{real} a' finds

what nick calls
that finger he
fished out of a

(yes)

~~the~~ pileup on
duncan road
while working the
night shift at
Clatter's ~~gas station~~

✓

gas he heard
the guy gunning
down ~~the~~ white
line black top
didn't slow for ~~the~~ / quail trap

curve when he
hit the guard rail
I went over

the ~~edge~~ ^{edge} he looked
like a dark moon
falling ~~down~~ into
the ~~middle~~ ^{middle} nick

keeps the finger
in a ball motion

Jay likes to think / what it points
~~it points at the~~ ^{etc. fall} of the night

it points at the
~~right~~ head of
the report

a real find's

what rick calls that
finger he fished
out of a pileup on
lyle road while
working the night
shift at slattery's
gas sd he heard
the guy gunning down
white line black
top didn't slow for
the curve rick beat
the cops & medics
to the wreckage in
the ditch looking
for money & found it
but the finger's
what he really was
after keeps it in
a ball mason jar
likes to think
where it points is
the heart of the
night

Burning the masks

we'd made out of card
board to scare girls
w/ earlier that day granger
~~had~~ had painted his mask
black w/ silver streaks
that were supposed to be
scars running under the
eyes on mine i colored
red paint across the fore
head & slant wise down
the cheeks to stand
for wounds i let them
start that fire of
paper sticks & twigs
w/ a cheap lighter he
took off a bid it
gave him a chance to
do quick hand tricks thru
flames w/out getting
burned then we dropped our
masks in ~~the~~ sparks
~~and~~ & waited in the smoke
to watch them go

10/31/84

(1)

TJR
11/20/84

burning the masks

we'd made out of card
board to scare girls
w/earlier that day
granger had painted
his black w/silver
streaks that were
supposed to be scars
running under the
eyes on mine i caked
red across the fore
head & down the
cheeks to stand for
wounds i let him
start that fire of
paper sticks & twigs
w/a cheap jap lighter
he took off a kid
it gave him a chance
to do quick hand
tricks thru flames
w/out getting burned
then we dumped our
masks in sparks &
waited in smoke to
watch them go

they
didn't see
me watching
them while
lee marvin
was pumping
somebody
full of slugs
she was
making big
grabs into
her boyfriend's
pants they
must've thought
the sound in
those gunfight
scenes would
cover the
noise of their
breathing but
i heard it
when the movie
ended i got
to the lobby
first & waited
at the popcorn
counter while
a platinum
blonde went
for my hershey
that's when
i saw them
he didn't even
try to cover
the wet spot
where the come
soaked thru

10/31/84
①
TFR
11/20/84

carries her rocker

to the cornfield
where she sits
in the midst of
late june corn
billowing all
around her after
an hour her
oldest son stan
swenson comes
out & asks why
she is sitting
in the sun on
such a hot day &
wouldn't she
like to come in
for an oatmeal
cookie & some
lemonade sez no
she would not
care to she is
waiting for god
when the sheriff
comes he tells
her he's god
that's when she
gets down in
the weeds &
kisses his boots

what we

used to do was
bring eddie mackey
our chicken & steak
bones & watch him
go get his hammer
then he'd sit cross
legged on the side
walk & start pounding
them into splinters
sometimes he'd smash
them so hard they'd
fly up even w/his
face the harder he
slammed that metal
into those cracked &
shattered needles
the more he smiled
afterward he'd
sit grinning w/pieces
of bone in his hair

i kept telling

jerry not to fuck around
w/the 22 revolver but
the whiskey was more
convincing & it went down
easy i was afraid he
was going to shoot one
of his father's horses
he'd already sent a
couple slugs thru the
big sorrel's legs he
liked to see it run &
the way we passed that
bottle back & forth was
like being in a western
movie till jerry aimed for
a fly on his pants leg
& put one in his calf then
he danced in the grass &
the blood went all over
but he couldn't stop
joking he stuck a cigar
ette in the wound to give
it a smoke

quitting time

for wilbur michaels
was driving breakneck
speed 4 blocks to
denny's horseshoe tap
so he could sit on
his favorite stool 3rd
from the end across
from the marilyn monroe
pinup which hangs
just below the sign
warning minors to stay
out what wilbur liked
to do was order a
schooner of draft that
he'd slip his false
teeth into & drink
whiskey till closing
mel zabel who worked
the grain elevator scale
once asked how come
you put your teeth in
a glass of beer wilbur
smiled w/his gums sd
keeps em fresh

the crippled kid

we'd let him
panhandle street
corners 3
4 hours before
we laid for him
& his pocketful
of change we'd
catch him between
exchange buffet
tap & chicago
street alley
where one of us
would take one
crutch & let
him do a bum
leg dance on ice
w/the other he'd
yell you bastards
but knew it was
a game we all
played he had to
pay us half for
using our corners
tho sometimes we
laughed & threw
that goddam crutch
across iced as
phalt watch it hit
black snow

helping

terry scanlon
rifle pop machines
for change he'd
use an ice pick
a pocket knife
a paper clip
& a wire loop to
jimmy locks
they almost always
clicked for him
opened wide
like girls' legs
saying yes i loved
scooping great
handfuls of coins
like reaching
for a warm feel
of crotch
then i walked the
streets w/pockets
full of someone
else's quarters
knocking on my balls

keller's tooth

resembled a wolf
or dog fang
& fit perfectly
in the fat
part of my palm
baker used
half a dozen
ball bearings
wrapped in a
sock to knock it
out after
keller had spit
tobacco juice
in his hair
he spent an hour
drooling blood
while making long
kicking sweeps
thru the grass to
find it i sunk
my hand deep into
my right pants
pocket to sneak
a feel it was
sharp against my
leg

when old man
 ferris finished clearing
 a string of channel cut
 he caught by the dam
 he wiped ~~his~~ ^{his} pocket
 knife off on his ~~trousers~~ ^{trousers} pants
 leg ~~and~~ ~~dumped~~ ~~backed~~
 heads & bloody pants into
 a bungee net & sail. he
 set ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~in the grass~~ ^{in the grass} ~~to the~~
 south eddie ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~area~~ ^{area}
 till he went ~~back~~ ^{back} in
~~the~~ ^{the} ~~area~~ ^{area} before stealing
 that ~~and~~ ~~that~~ ~~eddie~~ ^{eddie} was
~~wounded~~ ^{wounded} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~eyes~~ ^{eyes}
 that he ~~passed~~ ^{passed} ~~and~~
~~up~~ ^{up} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~blade~~ ^{blade} w/ an ice pick &
 pasted on windshields
 we ended up pitching
 fish head at girls
 & spilling blood on our
~~clothes~~ ^{clothes} eddie liked
 walking past people &
 yelling they look ~~at~~ ^{at}
~~my~~ ^{my} ~~wound~~ ^{wound}

11/14/84
 ①

when old man

ferris finished cleaning a string
of channel cat he caught by the
dam he wiped the butcher knife off
on his ripped trouser leg & dumped
a tangle of hacked heads & bloodied
guts into a banged metal pail &
set it in the grass next to the
porch eddie hunt & i waited till he
went into the house before stealing
that slop eddie wanted the eyes
used an ice pick to pop them out
they were perfect for pasting
on windshields we ended up pitching
fish heads at girls & spilling
blood on our clothes on the way
home eddie kept strutting past
people yelling look at my wound

3 fingers of

whiskey in a glass
of beer always
got shorty's father
going he'd fish
the winchester 94
out of a tangle
of hall closet trash
& swab an oil rag
over the barrel
then he'd sit in his
worn cane chair w/a
stub cigarette
screwed into the
left side of his
face & cradle that
rifle he called
his 30 gun across
his lap talking
about the sounds
slugs make when
they hit he liked
to stay that way
blurred in smoke

called

him bats
because he
was afraid
they'd fly
into his
hair nights
he'd slap
a clip
into the
22 auto &
put on
a football
helmet be
fore going
out to
shoot at
those black
slits swooping
at the roof
never hit
anything but
shingles &
bricks

everyone

knew when alma
was drinking
she always
had trouble
putting on lip
stick sometimes
she'd paste
a red circle
all the way
around her
mouth w/out
ever getting
any of it
on her lips
but goddam
she cd dance
all night fueled
on whiskey &
hardons jammed
tight against
her thighs

playing w/fire

behind the circle
tap passing
burning sticks
back & forth
a secret way of
saying hello
but jerry
who was afraid
of fire since
his mother
accidentally
torched herself
after drinking a
quart of scotch
kept asking me
not to
i didn't listen
jerry jumped
every time
i touched his
clothes w/sparks

angel bought

rico 3 rounds
before he
loosened up
enough to show
her his
artificial leg
2 more
then she could
touch it
after that he
didn't give
a shit took it
off she roped
it from her
studded belt
& did a little
bump & grind
to johnny be
good on the
juke she loved
the way it
banged against
her snatch

it was easy

it was very easy
& the gun was
big as max held
it on the package
liquor clerk who
was going to give
him the money but
max realized he
didn't want it &
the trigger wasn't
that hard to pull
he didn't recall
the revolver jerk
ing back only that
the clerk a fat old
guy went back into
a seagram 7 card
board sign then
started walking away
talking to the
blood stringing down
his shirt max stepped
outside still holding
the revolver he
hacked up a big yellow
oyster & spit it on
the hood of a lincoln
continental jesus
it felt good to get
that out

looking

at the racked
shotguns the
other side of
wire meshed
glass in ace
gunshop window
when he dances
up behind me
saying i love
guns hair a
white tangle
the wind rides
as he yanks
the tank top
out of his
pants to show
me a deep
furrow plowing
thru gut hair
sez that's
where death
tried to write
his name in
my meat starts
doing clumsy
buck & wing in
a pile of
cigarette butts
someone emptied
from a car
ashtray yelling
not even 3
strokes can
keep me from
dancing

-- todd moore

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by

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