

## BACK TO THE MACHINEGUN

I awaken about noon and go out to get the mail  
in my old torn bathrobe  
I'm hungover  
hair down in my eyes

barefooted  
tenderly stepping upon small rocks and branches

still afraid of pain behind my four day beard

as the young housewife next door shakes a rug  
out of her window and sees me:  
"hello, Hank!"

god damn, it's almost like being shot in the ass  
with a .22

"hello," I say  
gathering up my VISA card bill, my PENNYSAVER,  
the Dept. of Water and Power

plus a notice from the Weed Abatement Department  
giving me 32 days to clean up my act

I mince back again over the various debris  
thinking, maybe I'll write tonight, they seem  
to be closing in

there's only one way to handle those motherfuckers  
the night harness races will have to wait.

## THE 7 HORSE

the two old guys behind me were talking.  
"look at that 7 horse. he's 35 to one.  
how can he be 35 to one?"

"yeah, he looks good to me too," says  
the other old guy.

"let's bet him."

"o.k., we'll both bet him."

they get up to make their bets.

I've already bet. I've got 40 win on the 2nd favorite. I win four days out of five at a racetrack. it doesn't seem to be any problem.

I open my newspaper, read the financial section, get depressed, turn to the front pages looking for robbery, rape, murder.

the two old men are back.  
"look, the 7 horse is 40 to one now," says one of them.

"I can't believe it," says the other.

the horses are loaded into the gate, the flag goes up, the bell rings, they break out.

it's a mile and one sixteenth race, they take the first turn, go down the backstretch, circle the last turn, come down the stretch, get past the finish line.

the 2nd favorite wins by a neck, pays \$7.80. I make \$116.00 on the race.

there is some silence behind me. then one of the old men says, "the 7 horse didn't run at all."

"nope," says the other, "I don't understand it."

"maybe the jock didn't try," says his friend.

"that must have been it," says the other.

like most other men in the world they believe that their failure is caused by any and many factors besides themselves.

I watch the two old guys gather over their Racing Form to make their selection in the next race.

"gee, look at this!" says one of the old guys, "they got Red Rabbit ten to one on the morning line. he looks better than the favorite."

"let's bet him," says the other old guy.

they leave their seats and move toward the betting windows.

#### AN IMPORTATION

after the reading we went to her house, she had a large house with an iron gate imported all the way from Spain and the house was full of her beautiful daughters who were smiling at me with their lips and their eyes and their bodies but they left

and I sat with the lady in her breakfastnook and we drank and she showed me her book published in Europe some years ago and I looked at the cover and flipped the pages but I felt very unconcerned about ancient European literature: I had my money from the reading and a young girl in a large house (hers) in L.A. was waiting for me

but this lady was cultured or once had been and I enjoyed watching her smoke her long cigarettes and putting on her act

and she told me that I could have my own bedroom that night and I told her that was fine and we drank and drank and she talked and later that night she showed me my bedroom and she went off and I got under the covers for a while then I got up found her bedroom and got into bed with her and we did that ordinary and everyday and everynight thing and then we slept and the next morning

I waked through her imported Spanish gate and I took a cab to the airport and I flew back to my young girl with her large house