

PLANT NURSE'S STORY

Some guy walked in
and said he had to get a pass
to go home.
I said
what's wrong with you?
He said
I just need a pass to go home.
I said
there has to be something wrong
with you
or I can't send you home.
He said
I'm gonna kill my foreman.
I said
calm down for a few minutes.
He said
I'm gonna kill him
then walked out
so I never knew
who his foreman was
till they brought him in
all smashed up.
He was a mess, I tell you.

I didn't think
he was serious.
I mean I hear
that kind of talk
all the time.

-- Jim Daniels

Pittsburgh PA

GOING ON

down at North Avenue 21 you just slept on the floor and
there was always some guy who just about stepped on
your face on his way
to the crapper --
for that you had to curse him good, set him straight
so the other fellows would know enough to take another
pathway or just
forget it and hold it.

there was a large hill of green, you could see it in
daylight from the lock up
and many of the fellows after kick-out, they wouldn't

go back to the row, they'd just walk up into that hill
and they lived there like animals --
part of it was a parkground and some of them lived out
of the trashcans and others trekked down to the row for
feed and then returned
and
they all sold their blood for
wine ("the one who gets my transfusion is going to be
drunk for a long time!" was the old
joke.)

there must have been 18 or 20 of them up there and
they were more or less as happy as corporate lawyers
stockbrokers or airline
pilots.

civilization has sections just like an orange and when
you peel the skin away, pull it apart, chew at it, the
finalization is a mouthful of seed which you can either
swallow or spit
out.

most swallow it
like the guys at North Avenue
21.

PRACTICE

in that depression neighborhood I had two buddies
Eugene and Frank
and I had wild fist fights with each of
them
once or twice a week.
the fights lasted 3 or 4 hours and we came out
with
smashed noses, fattened lips, black eyes, sprained
wrists, bruised knuckles, purple
welts.

our parents said nothing, let us fight on and
on
watching disinterestedly and
finally going back to their newspapers
or their radios or their thwarted sex lives,
they only became angry if we tore or ruined our
clothing and for that, and only for that, we understood
them.

but Eugene and Frank and I
we had some good work-outs
we rumbled through the evenings, crashing through
hedges, fighting along the asphalt, over the