

GRANDPA'S ATTEMPT TO COMPLIMENT MRS. NUGENT ON BUILDING  
THE FINEST HOUSE IN TOWN

"Mrs. Nugent, that certainly  
Is a fine house you're  
Building there."

Mr. Griffin, I'll have you  
To know that I've lived  
In better.

-- Larry D. Griffin

Norman OK

DEPARTURE LANE: 27

"So, you don't really have to go."

Two suitcases under my left arm  
and an overnight jammed in my right.  
"I think it's probably best," I said.

One of the suitcases was swinging  
and catching me in the crook of my left knee  
every second step.  
It was about three miles from her place  
to the bus station and about 27 degrees centigrade.  
I was wearing the extra clothes  
that wouldn't fit into the cases.

"No, really," she said.  
"Maybe I was a little hasty."

She was wearing a blue, knee-high skirt,  
white frilled blouse,  
having taken off from work  
to walk me to the bus station  
during her lunch hour.  
"Maybe you should stay another day."

WHACK! The corner of the bigger case digs in.  
A trickle of sweat runs down my sideburn  
onto my cheek.  
It's been a mile and a half  
and I can't feel my hands.

I turn towards her.  
"Look, we decided. It's best that I go."

She gestures with her right hand,  
holding her pocket book with her left.  
"Yes, but it doesn't have to be today.  
You're just being an asshole."

WHACK! I can feel the blister forming.  
"Yeah, well, I've moved outa my room  
and paid for my ticket. It's all set."

It's two miles and the fumes from the lunch rush  
are starting to beat in on me,  
my arms feel like it's the eighth round.

WHACK! "Well exchange your ticket  
for tomorrow, please."

A small gust twirls smeary papers  
and columns little dust clouds.

"Look, the wheels are in motion.  
Gotta stay with it."  
But I'm weakening. The bus station  
is only a few hundred yards ahead  
and the urine-lonely smell is present.

WHACK! TUMBLE -- the suitcase in my left hand  
flies out and cracks open  
spilling mostly dirty clothes.  
The wind ruffles her white blouse,  
lifts her skirt up her graceful thigh,  
her perfume pulls at me.

"Oh, my!" she exclaims.

A car horn blaers and a couple of thugs  
leer out of a shitty colored Chevy:  
"OOH, BABY, FUCK ME!!!"

It's high noon,  
the sidewalks are shimmering,  
sweat is pouring down my arms.

"That's fuckin' IT!"  
I toss the remaining suitcases  
down, kicking the cases and clothes  
all over the sidewalk  
and into the street.  
She stands back, looks scared, looks excited.  
Her mouth is slightly parted,  
a soft, pink 'O'.

"I'm exchanging my ticket for tomorrow,"  
I say in a nicely, icy-cool voice,

"and you're phoning the office  
and getting the afternoon off."

Later, in the cool dimness of her apartment  
we eat take-out Mexican food  
and make long, sweaty love  
in our cool, white skins.

Satiated, she purrs that I can stay  
even longer, if I want.

But her dirty panties stick out  
of her blue skirt, lying crumpled  
in the corner. "No." I say;

my blister is going down  
and I have enough change to catch the subway  
to the station, in the morning.

#### STRIP SHOW

Tungsten lights  
blink off and  
on off,  
clean air devices  
whirl  
with mechanistic un-  
effort.  
The beer tastes homogenized  
tiles are blanched  
soap dispensers  
dispense  
and the perverts  
who peek  
at cocks  
without pissing  
are polite, un-  
offending.

The girls strip  
piecemeal, layer  
into layer,  
designed dainties  
falling through  
dioxane-blue twilight.  
By the last song  
they're down to the mound,  
razed, gaping,  
the mystery of the black hole  
displayed,  
the pudendum shiny as fins.