

THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECT

Drive-ins would be great if you didn't have to go there in your car. I like the blue neon and the fireflies, but I feel trapped by the doors and the pressure to have a sexual partner with me. There's a stigma attached to going there alone. And really concentrating on the movie.

Skiing's another source of frustration. Every time I take to the slopes I realize once again that skiing would be delightful if skis weren't involved. All my problems with skiing have been the direct result of the skis. Take them away, and you have one blissful experience! The pretty girls, the lodge....

No one loves geography more than I do, but the problems involved in keeping the Andes straight from the Azores make me want to wipe both places off the map of my admittedly limited intelligence. Just when I was starting to enjoy geography in school, my teacher ruined it all by making me memorize the exact location of all these cities, mountain ranges, and continents. She couldn't leave well enough alone.

And unfortunately it's no different with writing. I love writing even more than skiing or going to the drive-in, but there's no way to do it without putting words on paper. Reading over the things I've written is like watching a projector fail during a showing of "Downhill Racer." I'm the one who's tumbling through the snow. And I'm the one who's operating the projector.

DOOMED TO REPEAT IT

Up in that elm, a nest that's been empty for weeks. No other birds have moved in. There's a sensibility at work, a respect. Birds are considerate. Either that, or they're extremely picky about decor. But that can't be right, because they'll only end up building a nest exactly like this one. It's reminiscent of the hell you go through when learning to tie your shoes. Your mother hears the school bus outside, so she finishes for you. But you're determined to do it yourself, so you untie the perfect knots she's made and face the problem anew.