

thirsty beauty he called hussein, the oil hound.
it's been over a year now, hussein still shows
an arrogant power, burning oily loops of 50 wt.
as it idles by the curb.

DIACRITIC

I knew she was literary.
She even had diacritic marks
Over the tattoos on her arms
With acute & grave accents
As well as the cidilla & circum-
Flex. I swore she wore
The very flesh of poetry & once
Aroused to indignation by my stare
She dropped her Levis & mooned me.
No big deal. I was only going to ask her
To a poetry reading at the American
Sunbathing Association, plenty of time
To know each other because that would be
Sometime late next summer.

BARBARA BY THE SEA

— for Barbara at 92,
Avila Beach, California

When a new taco stand
Pops up in Avila Beach
Miss Barbara tastes
Each offering
Like Minerva strolling
Through the Parthenon.
"If I want it hot
I'll sit on my stove,"
She says to an anxious
Chef, "but your enchilada,
Honey, was made for the gods."

BE PROUD YOU ARE AN INTELLECTUAL

When the old Russian poet visiting our school
told us about Stalin, long Siberian nights
and fellow prisoners leaching salt
from the guard's beating canes
for their rations of frozen potatoes
we stopped badgering our parents
for more all-day burritos and double-orders
of fries
washed down with perplexing decisions
between coke, pepsi, mountain dew and doctor

pepper.

He told us to go to the library because they are all over our great country, warm in winter, cool in summer, librarians wearing pretty dresses — spend time there, he said, learn something interesting to you as an individual, be like I am, he said, stand up for things you believe in, be proud you are an intellectual.

— Ray Clark Dickson

Shell Beach CA

HOW CAN I WHINE?

How can I whine when Floyd Patterson, knocked down seven times in three rounds, says, "I'm the only guy to get up seven times in a championship fight"?

How can I whine when everyday I see the same guy running on the side of the road — in the cold, in the rain — looking down at his watch?

How can I whine with Mother Teresa bathing the wounds of lepers in Calcutta and shunning interviews?

How can I whine when I see mad wheelchair racers in the Olympics trying to break records?

How can I whine when Bob Gibson, his leg broken by a Roberto Clemente line drive, still manages to throw two pitches to the next batter before he collapses?

How can I whine when my grandfather is separated from his family for seven years while he makes enough money in America to send for them from across the sea?

How can I whine when the first time my grandfather sees my father is when my father is seven years old?

How can I whine when my uncle and father are told by my grandfather when they are in the eighth grade: "Whaddya gonna do — go to school all your life?"

How can I whine when the young Beatles play 8-10 hours a day in sleazy Hamburg bars — taking turns sleeping on stage while the others play?