

'UGLY WOMAN'

i feel like a traitor to humanity
calling her what everyone else does —
young but way too skinny
she's bagging groceries today
while on the register a new face
a shining young madonna, younger than the
'ugly woman' & the way 'the boss' keeps
glancing over, maybe her replacement —
'ugly woman' flashes boney haunches
reaching down for more bags
she catches my eyes on the girl
whose straight-arrow teenage beauty
fills me w/feelings — mostly generous
silly ones — i'm entranced —
'ugly woman' lunges for me
her old customer
takes my money herself, thereby superceding
chipmunk-cheeks madonna
i say 5 or 6 funny words to her
she frankly laughs
(maiden's nose is so far up
she'll drown if it rains)

NEW JERSEY

was an army truck driver
sometimes she drove our transports
out to various ranges, rifle
machine gun or what have you
we became friends —
got drunk together friday
saturday nights & talked
all this family shit & the bad
marriage on new jersey's mind
all the time & the war & the future
& did we really understand hippies
& how did we feel about nixon —
later up front in the truck
she told me i'd given her the best
head she'd ever had
which may or may not have been true
tho it was true she gave me
the best i'd ever had
& that's still true

tho a new yorker
i never make fun of
new jersey