

the beer I liked  
had a rising  
sun label

red sun  
red spokes  
white background  
just like the Japanese flag  
I liked the Japanese flag  
I liked the label  
I liked the beer

most of it was free because  
I was on Shore Patrol  
in the Military Police

I met a lot of stunning streetgirls  
& went to bed with some of them  
one of them introduced me  
to Sun Tory whiskey  
also with rising sun label  
but more elaborate & fiery

I began to drink  
fuck whores  
question everything  
in my own quiet way  
& at the same time  
I began to write  
just letters to a girlfriend  
but they were my start

Japan was one of the most  
beautiful periods of my life  
women  
booze  
liberty  
power

I was the buck sergeant  
in the Military Police  
who wrote poems  
with a siren

#10

I had a grandfather I never met  
who went to the opera every week  
for 30 years in Boston  
he worked for the railroad  
my mother said he was always  
singing or whistling arias

he disowned my mother  
for marrying a non-catholic

rain pounding  
on an old torn roof  
makes me write this down

it was here at Mary Smokes  
I first heard rain as symphony  
as opera  
as atomic jazz  
as music so evernew & emotional  
I could never come to the end  
of its beautiful intensity  
never hear it too often  
never tire of its simple  
yet intricate power

the sound of rain on rusty roof  
of this dump will haunt me  
for the rest of my life

#### TORCH POEM

the center of a flashlight  
beam is the darkest part  
then a ring of the brightest part  
& a less bright ring  
next to a dim one

I saw this as I walked  
up a grass lane between  
rows of fruit trees  
custard apples & lychees  
Pleiades to my right  
Southern Cross to my left  
blazing bull's eye cone  
of my small black torch  
showing me the way

#### DADA

whenever my dad  
went into a bar  
after a few drinks  
strangers flocked around him  
because he told stories  
straight whiskey no chaser stories  
straight from his drunken heart