

the ground in chunks and sank  
in — reminding me of how heavy  
the box had been when the  
undertaker had first handed  
it to me in evansville, indiana.

CHICAGO, APRIL 1994

chicago is nothing like  
new orleans; i thought  
that perhaps it might be.

we're driving around,  
looking for a park that  
some kid at the art  
institute told us about;  
said that the rent was  
cheap and that it was  
safe too. got lost,

i guess, since we ended  
up in cabrini green. all  
black skins out in the  
street, holding up fifty-  
five gallon drums one of  
them with fire coming out  
the top, thats what my  
lady said, i didnt see it

too busy watching the street  
and the kids darting in and  
out of traffic; all of them  
wearing clothes that did  
not fit; once white t-shirts  
hanging around battered knees.

i figure its too damn bad for  
all those kids; tooling around  
on flat tires and warped rims;  
but this place isnt a goddamn  
thing like new orleans. i  
dont see jesus anywhere and  
all i want to do is get out.

SMITTY, 2

i figure that esther will  
have some trouble with it  
later on; for awhile im  
not able to figure out  
the thinking of it all;

watching the gun come  
out and realizing that  
it wasn't aimed at you,  
feeling relief and then

horror, knowing and not  
able to do anything but  
watch as the gun took the  
back of his head off;

slumping back on the  
couch, aware that this  
was wrong, final. i

don't think that i could  
sleep in the same house,  
collapse tired from work  
on the same sofa again,  
knowing that fragments of  
his brain were there;

somewhere.

— Tom Caufield

Iowa City IA

#### RICKY WITH THE TUFT AND A PRINCESS WITH A SMALL BRAIN

When Ricky with the Tuft was born  
to a queen who knew he'd one day take the throne  
she cried out in horror because he was so ugly.  
His face was scrunched up like an old man's  
and his skin was tough as a cheap walking shoe,  
not soft like most babes'. His head  
was bald except for a single bunch of weeds  
growing straight up from crown of his head.  
Thus, his name. Thus, the constant teasing.  
To compensate, Ricky with the Tuft  
was a delightful child. He could add five or six  
numbers without using a pen or his fingers.  
He memorized the movements of musical pieces  
having heard them just once. He could render  
a person's likeness with paint and a brush.  
He was insightful and kind when he discussed world affairs.  
When it was time to marry, he chose  
the most beautiful in all the land. She was the princess  
who was as dumb as she was fair.  
Some say her brain was so small at birth  
that she didn't learn to speak until she was ten  
and that she still couldn't hold a fork very well.