



JoeFiles LXXIV

using photographs as scratch paper

took across town

on a
warm gray
morning
to
sit
here with
my
warm gray cat
on
the
lap
as my
goofy ankles
and
silly ball sack
absorb
the
mist
of
her bad coffee
morning ..

so,
as
the scheduled appointment
comes to
an
end,
the doc
has recommended a new
form of ointment,
as
the
gray cat digs
his claws into my
covered thigh
and
the
gray skies
look as though they'll never
relent
as
the
sun sits behind laughin' over South Carolina
or somewhere in Tennessee,
though

it's high
time here
as the yellow bus
comes down through the
neighborhood
to
get

the
kids

and
the phone rings,
interrupting

it
all ..

urban tails

sat
down with
a
young black girl,
14 years old,
and talked
to her about
some of the shit
these kids
are lookin' at
these days ..

she
was telling me about catching gonorrhea
about a year ago ..

got some cream
and pills
and she's was cured ..

she was a stripper also ..

goin' after this whole
sex game with a bull whip,
acting like a whore
deep in the heart of Vegas ..

sure,
she's one of the brightest kids
I know
and she talks with a calm assurance
and her eyes
are almost glazed
with that
'I'VE SEEN ENOUGH SHIT UP TO THIS POINT. I'M READY FOR A BREAK.'

then,
she tells me that
about a month ago
some goth kids have a prank in her school
where
they stab people on the stairwells with a
knife ..

they do it in such a way that
you can't see
who stabbed you,
they blend into the crowd
and
she's dealt with a leg of blood
and some healing time ..

we talked a bit more,
she said her grades were good,
the monotone voice that rose
in inflection here
and there was all full of kid and
adult

charm
and
I
know
beyond a shadow
of
talk

that she's ready
for
a
break

and she'll take care of it well ..

us and US

decided it's probably
not
my place to worry too much about it ..

country has been
doin' this for a while,
will do
it more ..

the bombs,
more food into the shelters,
the fatigues,
more bullets for the cartridges,
we can have all the weaponry and protection,
but the rest of the world needs to look to us as
the final link in the chain letter that
will be linked
or destroyed ..

not much for this kid to ponder over,
when that first experience of mine with pure nuclear havoc
comes,
these pages won't survive,
some of us may,
animals gone,
trees gone,

almost goin' into three wars
and
people are uncertain

seems like we may again as a civilization
wipe the slate clean and
let the primordial chain begin its cycle
again
as we
go down knowing that
America has the real bomb
and

was able to end it all

ending
it all for

pride's sake as
the

history books,
all of them,
burn

and wonder what all the glory was
for

as
Churchill's statue in London
finally get's it's
much deserved cigar back
in

it's bronze hand ..

what's all this?

you're bound
to not
win
when you think
you have it in the bag ..

sure,
it's all perception,
but
it's also
reception
and
when the wood
makes
the frame,
there's a chance
that it's just
an illusion ..

so,
we should probably
stop talkin' about
losing
now,
'cause
it's all just
all
perception
and
I'm ready
to

move

on
with a

solid conception ..

workin' by the king's son

Elvis Presley's son
is living
above the place I work in ..

times are tough,
Bush II's regime is in full wilting,
Elvis' son is on the corner of Minnesota
hustling for dimes and dollars ..

has a cartoon face,
saggin' shoes,
people are throwing money at the land's most famous son,
corner to corner he hustles when the lights change ..

he's savin' up for swig or
a rock,
daddy's money still hasn't come through,
so there's Elvis' son poutin'
about
Clinton out of office,
smilin' because Bush II should
be out in 2 ..

so,
Elvis' son is here ..

shit,
2 degrees from the
king of rock-n-roll I am
and 1 degree from a true
comic genius ..

the man only
known
as
Elvis' son ..

you don't have to care if it's snowing,

but

you should know that

it is here ..

the big head

above the cloud shelf

has

shaken the head

and sent the dandruff down

on us,

though

you don't have to care about that

either ..

a car is stalled

on the side of the

road

and

the faces sneer in

that

old familiar way

as

the

snow keeps coming

down

and the weathercasters

don't even

know when it's going to quit ..

all the cats of the world

are perched on a ledge

looking out as

the

sky's warning,

but you don't have

to care about it ..

all the read books

lie

like tombstones of potential waiting

for the next reincarnation

as the dogs hide under the bed

and the sheep

wait for the next

shaving

and

the snow keeps on falling,

but

you

probably don't want

to know because I doubt

you have noticed ..

**you woke up
and everything around you
was different ..**

car gone,
name different,
new ceiling,
girl gone,
some bucks in the wallet,
new view outside,
balls a bit bigger,
the flowers dead on the table vase,
more pickles than usual in the refrigeration,
the phone rings from strange location and you don't answer,
you turn on the TV and it's just a radio,
you go to shave your face and forget how to do it,
you check for punctures or cuts in skin - nothing ..

all you have is
a
piece of memory
that remembers,
slightly,
what was before ..

though,
it's ready to start fresh ..

no social security #,
no license,
no bills,
the world

is
out there ..

run fucker,
run
and
find her ..

a new her ..

2-6-2003

sidewalk criss crossers,
the sidekick saloon has it's feet
in the salts,
more snow they say,
red van straight through STOP sign without stopping,
clocks read well on the wall,
all the paints will reappear some day,
somebody really dug Dali,
the worm in a tuxedo,
the missile in a bra convinced the bar war was OK,
we have nothing but socks to throw at each other,
the coffee stays a bit warm,
drummers drinking lemonade,
the first joke was your entrance into the room,
the world in three colors as another brain goes to the birds,
all is quiet around here,
the nasty whores are sleeping it off as
the corporate boys laugh at nothing during the numbing meeting
while the inner city kid dreams of another bag of chips
and a good drink to swill it down ..

the small,
little nuggets,
you know,
the small
things the eye can see,
but like with listening through the ears
it takes sight to get all of it down through the retina
and
an abiding synapse
to
make

it fucking
concrete ..

**18 years behind bars
& the president still talks**

the convict
stopped us in the street after a gyro,
dip,
bread and drink the other evening
to
tell us about
his 18 years in the clink ..

he wanted a bit of scratch
to get \$9.50
so he could buy something at a store down the street ..

we were both honestly broke,
shook his hand,
told him so
as
he warned us to stay away from going to jail ..

he said it was hell
and
I thought about the State of the Union
speech
the President just said ..

that wasn't going to do this man
that
well ..

even a cut in taxes wasn't going to effect the
path he was on to afford
the
\$9.50 item down the street ..

so,
as I spit in the parking lot,
kissed the girl,
got into the car
and
headed forward in
my
evening

we all gear up for war
and
ready to drop enough money in bombs to buy him everything over \$9 in
this fair city of ours ..

and
we
all take the brunt on our shoulders

of
problems the lawmakers
promise
and
we face

as
DC goes into expensive party mode post speech
and
the rest of us poor
folk

dream of having just enough
for
next month's rent notice
that
will be in the proverbial mail box ..

big pink girl bike

tiny miracles on
the
corner of 37th and Baltimore ..

the hustlers,
pimps,
hookers,
junkies,
drifters
and
can heads likely didn't even notice ..

from this perch here above
the
roadway intersection I saw
a
tiny miracle yesterday ..

a
hispanic cat
had
his little girl on a pink bicycle showing her how
to
ride it ..

putting the petals into smooth motion,
steering in line
the day looks
like a simmering jewel on
dawn's early oven top
as
she ambles her
small machine and body across the street,
unsteady at times,
up the street,
turns around,
back down the street ..

the miracle continued
as
she went back and forth
and
her father farther down behind a brown tree out of eye's reach
as
the
small girl was conquering gravity
and
the
odds

against us all ..

next,
she'll be on a date
in
a
car,
but

for now
it's
innocence

on
wheels
and
there can be nothing more
to
be asked for

as
the
drifter scoots out of her way

to
catch

the
bus

up off
39 & Main way ..

Capote all over Again

my lover got
a call at my place
on Sunday morning from her mother ..

she sat on the phone in shock
a bit,
clicked the phone off and told
me
about it ..

a guy she knew at a restaurant off 39th
killed his occasional roommate with a hammer
and called himself in ..

the man
had a bad drinking problem ..

would piss on the bar stool,
vomit through his fingers,
took the front off a local bar some years ago while
driving drunk ..

but overall,
he was a kindred cat ..

she said he was even tempered all the years
she knew him,
never saw him blow up,
was perplexed that a moment of anger
will put him away for the rest of his natural born life ..

the guy he killed was a gay man
that had a drug problem
and would piss him off from time to time ..

but something went horribly wrong ..

cold blood
and
the
neighborhood is shook up ..

in fact,
he tried to cover it up with the cops ..

told 'em that he found the body in his apartment,
while he went to work and had the body
in his place for two days ..

something snapped and
shock took over ..

she's done telling me and
looks about with a faint glaze
as
the
newspaper print for Sunday morning is done
drying

and
the
next drama is on the horizon ..

this man's 41 years led him to that moment
and he'll have plenty to think it over in maximum security ..

another fragile reminder on
a random Sunday morning
and
the
furthering the definition of self-preservation ..

car doll

at the intersection,
head turned towards the passenger seat just
shouting ..

looking at the back of his head,
a man who looks like he always wanted to fly
an airplane,
but got stuck with train sets and model glue ..

shouting
as the sun was streaming through
the dirty hatchback window
accentuating his yelling ..

waving hands,
looking at nothing but the seat as the light
remained red ..

the set of ears in the front seat
was a small, flesh tint vanilla doll
looking forward ..

not responding,
though the man continued talking through the intersection
to this doll
in the front seat ..

the doll had a name,
Sandy ..

he would yell Sandy and
ride around with this
doll all the time ..

the folks about talked some nasty jive
on this man
for presumably acting insane,
yet no one knew why he would talk to a doll in the
front seat of his car
and he never told anyone why ..

he would just do it ..

the truth is,
he lost a daughter in a car accident some
15 years ago
and the doll keeps him sane ..

keeps everyone else from looking insane
as

he
gets pegged with the
continual moniker of insane ..

the man with his doll
and

the
daughter
that
flaps the eye lids
when he leaves the car ..

cobra tongue

had a talk with the spoken word poet
the other night
about
a
poem he read into the mic
at an open mic talent show earlier ..

before his poem,
he told the entire place to shut the fuck up or
get out ..

it was a tough crowd ..

a caravan of drinkers and no one seemed interested
until he
threw the verbal hammer out ..

everyone listened,
including myself,
I stopped the talk
and
was impressed with his fire
more
than anything else ..

he had some good lines
and
we talked about how bleak the poetry market
was to
place
and
get paid ..

you never waver on your
day job
if you
slam the pages
with
the
words ..

he asked for my name,
I told him,
we shook hands and he
asked if I was the one that
put my chapbooks around town
and I said 'YES' ..

he said he always picked 'em up and it
was nice

to
put a face to the pieces ..

I don't get out there
and
read
or
mingle much ..

the poet circles make me dismayed
and
the coffee house genius'
are
almost enough to restrict me to
coffee at the house ..

another couple of
folks
out
there in love
with the 26 letters
and
lookin' for somewhere else
to go
as

the paper's run articles on how
poetry is getting
more and
more popular in these
tough
times
on the brink of a new war every other day ..

though,
it wouldn't matter
and
it doesn't seem to that much
when you sit down and begin
laying it out ..

it's about getting
the word
down

and
if you

see this,
maybe
we
are getting somewhere
for
the
man on the stage
and

the
kid
in
the
chair trying

to leave it
on
the
page

and
sting the eye balls if lucky ..

commercial glue paints

foot dancing
to the Peanuts theme
as Charlie Brown wonders about
me and my break onto the prime time TV ..

filmed a commercial for the place I'm working
for and everyone keeps telling me they
see it playing on the television ..

between dating shows and back
late night talk shows,
there I am dancing out of synch with the others in the frame,
walking about an exercise floor like a thug,
doing a bit of yoga
and smiling with my arm around another young damsel in distress ..

thought the commercial was to run for a couple of days
and it's gone on for weeks
people keep seein' my jack ass
on
the TV as
I go through the serial drama
of
my weave through this life ..

don't watch much of the TV myself,
haven't caught the commercial yet
as
another tells that they saw me
the following morning ..

local celebrity
they say
as
I spend the 50 bucks they gave me to do it on
shit I couldn't even
itemized in brief for you now ..

sometimes you do some things for money
that no one will ever see ..

other times you do it and no one will ever forget ..

this will go down as the venture
that
folks won't forget
as
we
slip into the next
bar,
measure,
moment,

evening
and

the ever
here after hustling

for
money to keep the home warm

and
the
kids laughing at
this jack ass

dancing
without
rhythm

and
keeping my eye on the
rhyme the whole
fucking
time ..

could have – would have – should have

I could do so much
more if
I stayed
here at the house today
or
just simply didn't go to work ..

if I could cavort around
on my clock in
the
sunshine ..

land of industry,
downtown democracy,
urban candy canes,
the money is hanging below the graves,
the greed of centuries still haunts humans,
we only learn what we we're taught because so many died,
the subtle points of living are just tiny subtleties
and that's where we are stuck with it,
chickens our there running away from the guillotine
as another CEO boss steps down from his post
and the rest of us with papers in hand are supposed to really find a fuck to give,
the other ants spread out around here trying to find new work or existing work,
the world is only fair if you understand that everything is unfair,
we are naked always,
we say what we think - only what we think we know,
the good ones do always die young,
the funny little ones who always start shit seem to stick around for some reason,
dogs and cats deserve our place,
make that Great Dane the President of the US ..

wasting a little more time with words as the clock
clicks
very near the time
I should be in,
haven't factored in driving time,
though
I've factored the important
shit

and
that's shit enough
for
now ..

damn liar

a few weeks back
a co-worker and I
went around getting some food,
I picked up a phone,
he had to pay his younger brother's
court fine
and we were out for the afternoon ..

once we returned,
my co-worker dropped me off
and went somewhere else ..

when I came in,
the lady that ran our place
was waiting with a terse face
and serious questions ..

I lied straight to the boss' face ..

several minutes later
she called around
and checked me on it ..

I lied a bit more ..

and I was good with that ..

there are some days you just
need to take the afternoon
and get to know folks
around you better
and jack off your time a bit ..

more than that,
I need these fuckin' people to get out of my hair ..

I still feel good about the lie and I may do it again
if it protects me from having to work so god damn much
in my short life ..

that,
as I get ready to go in
to work
right

now ..

death at the comedy show

The funny big black kid
comes into our
center about every
day
talking
and
laughin'
'bout something ..

a healthy cusser,
he talks about his girls,
the night twirls around this
kid
as
he talked a bit about his days ..

recently,
told us about a girl
he
may have gotten pregnant ..

told him to get her
a
pregnancy test and
find out what's going on ..

he came in about a week later
and said
she had
her
period ..

he just went off with some
more laughs
this kid ..

talkin' about how his football team is shit,
bad knee,
always downloadin' a new tone
for his silly cell phone ..

then,
one day he
broke out the quote of the day,
month,
week
or more ..

with a solid
shit eatin' grin
he said
that he just wanted to live his life smiling and laughing ..

in fact,
he said that he wanted to die in the comedy house,
if he was lucky enough ..

I think I'll
join him
when
the time arrives ..

figures on paper

nothin' more to
argue
with another individual
when you have already
argued
it out in your mind ..

no where left to go when there's
nothing but
solvency left warming next to the fire place ..

though,
there's something to say about talking
a solid talk about
the
comic's first
revelation
at
the
end of the night

and
there's more to say
when an
understanding
can
come

and
there is no need to argue anymore ..

I'm made of bone and blood
and
there's nothing more to hide from any of
you
all out there
as
the
smooth little sax man
takes
it
into the bridge section of the tune

and
the
radio DJ says
what

the time and temperature
is

over
the
radio

when
you forgot

the
last time you thought

about
either air quality

or
your place in the nighttime ..

fingers in the insurance pie

talked to my insurance
guy a
couple of weeks back ..

he asks me about the wreck I had in the back of a bus ..

shit,
how did he find out about it ..

well,
after a little hit and run I thought was going to
dissolve away,
they file a \$1,900 claim
and
go for my rates to rise 20% over the next three years ..

I explain it to my rep,
who lost my number and bobbles along on his way
and he says that it's my fault,
even if someone ran me into the bus ..

like a patch of ice or a stray dog,
I have no license plate number and no leg to stand on ..

I get a number from the woman that filed the claim
and call her ..

she says,
"I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO. IT'S FILED AND THAT'S THAT."

well,
I explain to her what happened and
that I want her to go to be knowing that she is going to penalize
an innocent man and make his insurance rates hike up a bit
for something that was out of my domain ..

she didn't seem to care
as the clown kills the daybird
and the ocean breeds another bird in flight ..

I have to live with it ..

another scenario I have to live
through as I chalk up the \$900 dollars I pocketed on another
hit and run that I caught up to and
collected on ..

want to put the woman's picture I talked to
on every light pole in the neighborhood
with
the

simple quote below it ..

'YOU JUST HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT.'

in all the tragedy and beauty
of what we do and who we are,
sometimes,
if not most of the time,
we just have to live
with
it ..

so,
live with this,
sweetcheeks ..

for all time

Every conversation
you
have,
I have,
she has,
we all have collectively comes
down to one topic ..

TIME ..

you talk about the other night,
the next day,
the day before,
that one time .. ,
If I only had time,
Do you have the time?,
when was the last time,
what time do you need to be there,
how long will it take,
how long did it last,
was it worth your time,
can't handle it even one more time,
time,
whether the word is mentioned or not,
it's the catalyst ..

everything is time,
it took time to get
down to this point,
and the point
is

there's
something else
out

there taking
up
your time,
if it's not this
so

HAVE A DAMN GOOD TIME ..

grand gray ball sack

my new male
fat gray cat
and his ball sack ..

good lookin' set of
balls
on
the
feline ..

if he has nine lives,
like they say,
this is the sack in the life
he should keep ..

prouncin' up and about,
howlin' like a champ,
whether in heat
or for passers to look at his
balls,
the guy has an impressive set ..

a big,
sleek lookin' mountain lion kind of cat
and
his big old back of nuts in
a
sack ..

he's proud of 'em,
his piss has a real stink,
markin' the place up like an English teacher on menopause,
the
cat and his big gray ball sack ..

like to see him keep 'em,
but tomorrow morning
they're gonna be cut ..

have enough cats in the world
that doesn't live with folks ..

sure gonna
miss that big ol bag of nuts in
in a sack ..

don't know how to break it to him,
but the docs
will ..

just hopin' he'll understand when the medicine
wears off and he

knows that
he
won't have that big old bag in the back ..

hey old man,
you had a good
run

we're all gonna
miss
that

cat
pride of yours ..

**Guns with fucks;
Fucks with guns**

a Friday evening
I'm here with a friend
and his wife ..

we're at the computer with the window in front of us
and she's on the couch,
then
'BAM .. '

'BAM .. BAM'

gun shots are fired ..

I'm looking at the corner where the sidewalks meet
and wondering who got shot ..

they were close,
loud
and had the ring of uncertainty ..

then,
the gal tells us that it came from a balcony across
the way
and
I see a couple of guys pacing ..

'BAM .. '

another one goes off ..

couple of fucks
high on the rock or whatever the drug of choice was
that night
shooting up the neighborhood
with
the
own blend of urban anger,
thrill ..

rattled a bit,
I have my girl call an anonymous call in on 'em,
then I did the same ..

a cop car careens through the intersection and neighborhood carefully,
but no one is apprehended ..

the bullets are probably still heading
straight back down
to earth
as
these

cranked up fucks laugh their laugh
and belly along
their way ..

the only shots I've heard or seen in this neighborhood
has been
from this little white hip hop motherfucker
who has already been arrested
on disturbing the peace
with his
little piece ..

so,
as the bullets rain out of the Friday sky
about this hood,
get your umbrellas
and
inside
until it
passes ..

just got off the phone with my lover ..

had a talk about our future,
what's goin' on right now ..

the relationship has enough unconditional ties
to keep us fighting ..

good talk,
pacing a bit,
thinkin' about the solid times,
you put out the bad
to move on ..

we came to the resolve,
will see each other later,
then
the conversation is over ..

click the phone 'OFF'
and
the phone immediately rings ..

assume it's her,
pick it up with a scotch in my hop,
it's not her ..

an old friend of mine
I had a dream a bit back that he got married ..

told me then he didn't ..

though,
the first thing he said was that he did get married ..

seems like everyone around is either married,
getting married,
single for a while,
yet few are fighting through a long relationship
as
I am now ..

not much bouncing off
with real experience,
though
he was ecstatic
about the proposal ..

we talked about drinking or eating soon
and
we left it at that ..

click the phone 'OFF' again
and

leaned back for a good,
solid cigarette ..

just a thinking about
how it's all gonna work out ..

this perplexing,
cool,
enigma
called
love

that no one ever figures out ..

we just go about,
therapists and all,
thinking
we have it figured out in our own world ..

and that's OK,
I guess,
keeps us all from ending up with little and
going completely insane ..

though,
I'm still slicing through the questions

and
finishing this cigarette
with

nothing
but her

on
my
head ..

just hello

windows
rattlin',
the sound
of
light
all about ..

neighbors packing up the last
of
the prior holidays,
others watching the tube
without a rest for the contacted eyes for some time,
it's the yuletide
ride
and
the gathering of light bulbs
for
next years opening day ceremonies ..

still as a small itch on the back of the ankle,
the streets
sound quiet as the restive
holidays
come down dwindling to its last standstill
and
folks ready for the sack
to
their thankless jobs
in
a
time when being thankful for a job
has
never seemed so demanding ..

with a plate of things to do,
the boredom
never seems to be a problem
around
here
as
the
procrastinators
hypothesize
what they are going to do in the next year ..

we
have
already done that
as
scraping the bottom of the moonshine barrel seems

to be
child's
play

as
I say

hello
over
and
over

while

the saying of a GOODBYE
is almost
as

hard

as
admitting defeat ..

Keys, Fortune and Signatures

on my first trip to
the old country about 2 years back,
met up with a pen pal I had been writing for some
11 years ..

she came to the states several years before
to get her head polluted a bit with out banter
and American culture ..

so,
one day we went to central Tuscany and
had a fat seafood feast ..

on the way back we stopped by
an old town called Bolgheri that was famous for an Italian poet in the 17th Century ..

the name escapes me,
but I stole an old skeleton key from a shutter
and had some pics
next to a statue of this poet with his mother
in the center of town ..

then,
we went to this old antique shop in town
that my pen pal,
Debbie,
and her brother and wife
wanted to look at ..

we walked in and the gal behind the counter looked like
my grandmother and walked about in a an old country way
the likes of an Italian woman that had some class ..

her name was Rina Giani
and she was a poet herself ..

the poeta's volume was called '.. GIOSUE' CARDUCCI'
and I bought a copy of
her poems,
she autographed it for me
and talked to me in Italian and
had it translated for me ..

she got the story on how I ended up there
to visit my pen pal
and
she started talking to Debbie,
her brother and wife about us ..

Debbie started getting uncomfortable
and she wouldn't translate for me ..

something about how
our connection was more than friends. .

this spooked her a bit,
with a new engagement to a good kid and all,
and went on for a bit longer ..

we walked out,
I shook her hand and thanked her for the book and autograph,
as Debbie
was shaken a bit ..

she never told me what the old poet in the hills told her,
but there was something mysterious and magical
about the whole encounter
and
I never knew what was said ..

that's why I look back now and marvel a bit ..

Debbie and I still write
and nothing is said about the old poeta in the hills
as
we

cling onto fate like a fragile flower that will die
someday ..

yet this flower of fate in my hand likely will never die
because I don't have the full story
and the faculties to
destroy it with anymore thought ..

holdin' onto that skeleton key as a metaphor
for
what could be

and
what
was
on that simple day in 2000 up in
a famous man's back yard of stitching words together in
some magical blend that
made it easier
for
many Italians
and
folks around
the
world to live
with what's know

and

what

shouldn't be known ..

makin' all the poor girls cry ..

each one of 'em ..

they ask how many potato chips
you can eat in one setting or one bag,
I ask how many women have you made cry ..

1,
2,
9,
52,
17
?

go ahead,
if you have never made a girl
cry,
you
are
in elite status ..

the girl had to be tougher than emotions
and
probably not really into you ..

so,
I think I've made too many
girls cry ..

one comment,
something discussed,
it's never because they stub a toe ..

they just cry too
damn much ..

and I'm here to let it
known that I'm not trying,
nor have I,
to make these girls cry ..

for instance,
one girl that used to work with me
called the other night
because I didn't show up at
her going away gig ..

she was lopping and doppin' over the
phone,
had some drinks,
she said something about not ever seeing me again,
how good it was to know me
and
bam the droplets started ..

I thought she was joking,
a friend of mine grabbed the phone
and asked,
'WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER?'

I don't know ..

I guess I just made her cry ..

my most reliable response
after a good girl cry session ..

I DON'T KNOW,
I JUST DON'T KNOW ..

girls?

meat hooks in my eye lids

after a night
with
a friend and his gal ..

had a sandwich,
drank some cheap suds,
watched him sit in his dogs shit
that was in the car the whole time we were in the bar,
watched the young Mexican man dart around the table drunk
talking nonsense
as his gal looked on in embarrassment,
the long haired old guy with the ladies features,
the guy sitting next to us telling us about being stood up,
the angry yuppie sitting next to us yelling at his friend girls to come up the steps
to shoot some pool,
the other faces taking in the scene
as
the cook comes back and props the door open for some fresher air
and
the night looks nice from behind the neons
and the stories
that can make you rise and fall ..

all this
and the meat hooks on my eye lids,
being lifted one
more
time

before this kid goes down for another stand off
with
living tomorrow

and
the
tomorrows
that
come on the edge of a q-tip ..

mike
is in the back room
checking the books ..

sitting alone with a soda,
he said it's been a bad week at
the tracks,
but last week was a dandy ..

he stuffed his numbers away
and we talked about a recent film that went
back to his earlier days as
a
screenwriter ..

he just saw a movie
by the guy that wrote the screenplay,
was impressed
as
he thought over the
numbers some more ..

another cat behind,
with the stench of liquor on his person,
was working over a bowl of chicken noodle soup
as
the
talk went on and
he
was daydreaming about the track and turning his week around,
tomorrow is Wednesday,
there's enough passion in the world
to
work into his compassion ..

Mike with the folks
in the dayroom trying to get on their feet
once more,
Mike pouring over the numbers,
he's keeping everything in equilibrium
there
with
his old No. 2 pencil
and
somewhere else to be ..

Mike
in the back dayroom
keeping
the
world in motion

as
we spin
into the

wide
crack of
resolve ..

military talks

the sergeant at arms calls
me on the phone and
asks if I would like to
join the military,
the Army ..
asking about whether I'm interested in the military or not ..

sure,
like watching those films ..

no .. no .. no,
he says,
how about joining the military ..

nah,
I come back,
my pops told me all about it growing up
and scared the thought out of my head,
just not for me ..

if you don't mind my asking,
he began,
what kind of stuff did he tell you
about the military? and what branch was he in?

he was in the Air Force in Kansas City,
I started,
and he told me about accidental death during training routines
on the base,
the death on the battlefield and
the government ownership of all once you join ..

yea,
he started with a thought,
it's not all that bad. in fact, since he was in the service accidents during training
and non-war periods have drastically dropped.
now, about the perils of war .. do you enjoy your freedom?

I'm all for it,
I came back.

we'll are you patriotic,
he asked.

I think so. I vote and try not to dirty
the streets with litter,
I told him.

there you are,
an active part of our democratic process. come on man, let me send you
some literature about what we have to offer. just look it over

and throw it away and forget we talked if it doesn't look good,
he says with enthusiasm.

look sergeant,
I began,
it's not gonna happen. just live with this. I don't want to be in the military,
though I have often wondered how my reaction time would be in war. somewhere inside
I think I would be good at it.

maybe you should entertain it more,
he starts,
what's your address?

no, man,
I come back.
don't send me anything. it's not gonna happen.

all right,
he says disappointed.

by the way sarg,
I begin,
aren't you recruiter's real assholes on the base. sugar coating potentials with
flowery language and la-de-da talk and then the hammer comes down. it's your kind
of folk, right?

sure,
he says,
that's just the way it is. you have to train some of these lowers into being obedient
and ready for war.

not into it,
I come back,
don't need any programming beyond the news on TV and the stories on the street.

you may be missing out,
he says,
maybe you are cut out for it.

made the decision long ago,
I say,
can't do it. been resolute in this for some time.

well,
he says in urgency,
have to go. take care with yourself and maybe next time.

look,
I start,
don't call me back about it. it's final. my pops was my recruiter growing up
and he couldn't crack the shell. certainly you won't either.

good luck, son,
he starts,
keep voting.

i'll try,
I conclude.

monday surgery

everything is hanging
up around here,
looks like the gravity knob
has been twisted till it
can't slip no more ..

the kids of the Guardian Angels school
sit in their slacks and skirts obediently
as the pervert in the back of the class
sweats because he knows that someone else
knows about him ..

the man on the corner of 57th and Park
takes a pipin' hot slice of pizza pie to his mouth
as
his eyes squint,
the swallow above squawks,
the boy switches over to Confucianism
and
tells his Jewish parents that
he had
a
dream the night before ..

took my cat in for
the ball cutting
as
I cross my legs
and wonder
how much he's going to blame
my white balls
for the loss of his gray balls ..

it's a gray day out here in the city
as
the gravity looks spectacular
and holds everyone
high
uptight
right
light
bright

all right?

my wet sheets in 1 dream

there are some moments
with your mate that
can really make you feel naked ..

I had a naked moment recently
waking up next to my lady ..

so,
we hadn't had 'THE SEX' for some time ..

I woke next to her with the early morning urge
to piss bad,
just before the alarm was to go off ..

we had both been running
tired for some time,
so 'THE SEX' was
something that unfortunately slipped
through the cracks,
so to speak ..

woke to walk nude down the steps
and while I pissed my urine,
I smelled the smell
and
look around the shaft to see the spectacular ..

a coagulated puddle of cum
around the shaft of my dick ..

I wiped up and
went back up to clean the rest before she
noticed
and
she had the blanket crumbled in her hands after reaching over to
turn off the alarm ..

she said,
'THIS WILL TEACH YOU TO NOT HAVE SEX WITH ME FOR A BIT.'

I stood there naked with my
awkward face
and
cock
saying I had no idea ..

naked as the day I was born
and
no where to go with a good comment or explanation to
wane the conversation ..

just threw on some bottoms,
went back downstairs
to cook
some

coffee
and
rid the cum moment that
was

bound
to keep on
coming
whether I liked
it
or
not ..

sifting through the male hex
and

trying to figure
these
testosterone
moments

of
my

with
that
damn
full
on
naked feeling in front of a crowd
of
angry skeptics ..

nice kid,

a neighbor of mine just moved out last night
and left his kid's child seats in my
place overnight to pick up this morning ..

told him to come by,
we would have a cup and
talk a bit ..

he came by and
we did so ..

the empty seats are very empty ..

hasn't seen his kid for over a year
and it's gonna stay that way ..

the ex went nuts and
has court ordered him out of her life ..

he has another 8-year old and
doesn't see her either ..

caught between the moon and an eight ball,
you can see it in his eyes ..

told me this morning about a viral infection he caught from his ex
to top it off ..

genital warts ..

can't ever shake 'em ..

sometimes they flare up
and he has to burn them off ..

sometimes the doc has to laser them off ..

the lasting reminder,
I supposed with our fate as it is,
that he
had a rough go with this bird ..

though,
he sat there squeezing out some gas,
talking about the wine,
whiskey and Nyquil he had light night ..

made another pot of coffee,
rolled him some smokes
and
he asked if he could shit in my bathroom ..

I waved him in
and

admired the courage ..

most don't have the
balls
and this kid does ..

hope he shakes the dust,
spins the karma wheel well
as
he drives off for the last time

and
gets to see his kids
again ..

a guy with that much courage
and guts
only deserves as much ..

this is for you neighbor,
for your bowel movements
and
luck with the ladies and your cock ..

this is for you,
chief ..

night corral

the insane girl around the
corner has
corralled the cops,
ambulance,
fire engine if lucky,
again ..

swirling lights of a cone o' copia
going
around and
around
for
the
neighbors to wonder
as
we all twist our necks
and
calculate our theory
and
why they are there again ..

fight?
overdose?
insanity?
false alarm?
three strikes and you're out?
all the above?
none of the above?

it's not a quiz
out there on the urban concrete,
there's something of the truth swirling
in
the
bright blue,
white
and
red cherries
coming over
and
over
our wet eye
balls

and
it just doesn't seem enough
trouble to actually
get
out

there and find out
what's
going on ..

like going to a party for hundreds of folks
wondering if
the
person who invited you will see you or not ..

it's just
face
time

and
we are all full of face time ..

shit,
we can't even remember names

so
to
find out any more

of
the
emergency
vehicles
new

arrival

can
wait

for
the
silent flicker of lights
of the cinema,
if
it gets that far ..

if
not,
made up stories always
have
a
solid way of being a more
solid bet ..

no one is ever happy ..

scenery of smiles,
handshakes,
compliments,
the water is just right,
the sky is where it should be,
that person was great,
no need to worry about me,

no one
seems to be too pleased ..

they give with one hand
and take with
their 2 feet,
the

wheel of music goes
in
reverberations around the room ..

the sidewalk is collapsing
and
no one knows what side to jump to ..

been around folk like this lately
and
it drives me
because there seems to
be
a
lack of fortitude goin' about ..

don't know if it's winter,
disdain with job,
family,
girl,
boy,
whatever the case,
no
one seems to be happy ..

so,
I'll end this on a happy note ..

the
cat is eating her
food from
the
bowl

and
that damn tail is just swiping
around

like

a magic
wand

covering me,
all of us
with
truth ..

old apples

new technology
can get this
kid in a pinch,
now ..

good thing I didn't have the easy accessibility
to
lap tops
and
instantaneous gratification
while
going to school ..

would have flunked out
real quick ..

wasted money,
bills to still pay,
so
it's good that Gordon Moore's
prophesy
didn't
come too soon to fruition
as
I

look square into the eyes of
the
monster now
and
contemplate if
it's time

well spent
or
time

just
spent

here with you
and
all these escaped
lines and
words

that
stack
and
stack

and
stack
and
stack
and
stack
and
stack

UP
here
over
the
electronic pages
of
this thing

that still keeps me
peering in for
more

something
to
keep my subconscious
still intrigued

with

this waking mind of mine ..

old new year

sirens go
off ..

used to it down
here in this neighborhood ..

look up after the water is boiled and
ready to be
pressed french style
and
there are sirens right out
there
from
the kitchen window ..

cherries lit,
nice sunset,
snapped a shot
with the camera
on my off-duty journalistic
duty to myself ..

then,
got the CD unstuck from sticking
and
sat down as the ambulance clicked off the lights,
stopped at the sign
and
I looked into the lit chambers of the
back cab ..

all lit up,
no one in back,
empty,
nothing worked on,
an alarm that didn't bring a body along ..

everything safe from the house behind,
empty ambulance,
the last light of the first day of 2003 is
being squeezed like a lemon
on a fist of fruit's rhine
and
everything
again

appears to be stable
as
the
CD player
comfortably slips into

song 2

and
the
world is ready
on
its tilt
to
go

disaster free

as
the
nightly news puts on
its finishing touches
for

it's
big
night

of
global

importance
shining out
the
back

of
an
empty

ambulance

that
goes on
to

a
fresh cup of

coffee ..

post nut poaching

one of the few links
to innocence that
doesn't get tainted once
it gets old is
a
house cat or dog ..

my housecat
just got his nuts
snipped off the other
day

and
it was a helpless feeling ..

I picked him
up in a cardboard box they sold to me
for
three bucks,
let him out while in the car
and
his bleary eyes looked up in
exasperation
as he fumbled through the laughing
gas around the car ..

when home,
he could only drink water
and was mowing away
at anything in sight to simulate food
cause his body
wasn't ready for the vittles yet ..

he
fell off of shit the
was trying to leap on,
fell asleep in my lap at one point
and
went limp like a rag doll ..

thought
the
guy was dead and
was ready to call the emergency number
as
he meowed,
snapped to and
looked up at
me
as
the when the nightmare was going to end ..

stuck it out with him for the evening
as
he fumbled through his
flailing curiosity
and

knew that he was going
to keep him innocence
and unabashed curiosity

as
many humans
act as he under the poison
in
sobriety,
just
fumbling,
falling,
sleeping

and
getting
ready
for
what

is
hard to describe in
this short script ..

red faced morning

boys walkin up,
dope eyes,
snow shootin' in
directions
hard to tell,
coffee settlin' in pot,
the kettle is silver,
the pigeon lost his small toes,
the crow donated his wing to a young 'let,
yellow tailpipes goin' over
black manholes
as the snow comes drizzlin like cold sprinkles
and the heater recites the last verse in Matthew
as
we clutch to what we think we
have

and
go on
with this red faced morning,
coldest on record,
I reckon,
just
as
we did before ..

rob your own house

we talked about it
for some time,
the neighbor and I ..

wanted to break into the
basement of this
house we're living in
and
take a look at
what could be down there ..

cracked the lock on the first of three doors,
scored a lampshade and a bowling ball ..

moved on to the second door
and got
a good look at a treasure trove
of goods ..

DVD players,
CD burners,
electrical cords,
holiday costumes,
electric cords,
office supplies
and lights ..

looked about for bit,
then made it through the plastic tarp down
into the basement ..

saw the archaic heater keeping the place in suffice,
then
I poked my flashlight at a naked doll propped up next to a
bottle of bleach ..

this was enough to give us a good solid creep
as
we watched the cop lights flash and twirl
across the street
at
the theatrics of an old crack whore that was getting someone else arrested on her front
porch ..

the man in cuffs,
a homeless guy pacing the sidewalk
and
us wondering if they were taking the guy away or coming in for us ..

the landlords across the street
may have seen the flashlights
and called the fuzz themselves ..

so,
I picked up an old photo album,
laughed about the insanity of the night we chose
and
headed back out to get a celebratory drink ..

something about an innocent break in while
the
cops hustled another lead

and
we finally got our
curiosity satiated ..

another
solid
evening
of
debauchery in the hood ..

scarf and a smile

the gal and I
woke early,
met 'em
to get the old BMW workin' ..

no such luck after a trip to the
hardware store and
the way this engine manifold was curled into
the rubber tubing we had to replace ..

so,
there was some guy named 'ALLEN' that
was called hours earlier
and he
was likely not going to show ..

he was the man that originally sold the car
to the girl,
who since moved and needed to sell the car ..

as it stood,
he folks were fucked and likely were going
to drive 3 miles back out east and ponder
a better way of getting the car transported ..

well,
finally this 'ALLEN' character shows ..

he has a mat of blonde,
yellow,
dark hair I can't figure out ..

has a face that screams late 70's and he has
the manifold off
as we pull up and
our friends ready to leave town ..

I start talkin' it up with this character
as the gal goes in to give the kids a call
and have them come back to the house ..

so,
I this 'ALLEN' character is talking
about how hard foreign cars are to work on,
shows me various rubber tubes that have since hardened,
some that have so much tape it's hard to tell what it is,
then he
shows me his Nissan truck ..

the inside of it is just a bunch of
guts,
nothing but seats that hold him off the ground ..

it's cold,
there's snow on the ground
and I ask if it's
a bit too cold ..

he said
'NAW'
just when the snow kicks up ..

this man had the calm resolve of a perfectly viable
insane
man

and when he was finished with the car
and ready to pack up,
he was offered a couple of bucks ..

he absolutely wouldn't take it ..

they offered him 20 bucks for a job that would have cost
at least \$150 or more in a shop,
he refused ..

instead,
he wanted one green scarf my
lady friend had ..

he took it,
wrapped it around his neck,
shook a hand or two and
drove
off ..

it was one of
the most glorious things
my
eyes have seen unfold in a while ..

silent hum of music

over
the
airy apartment,
the old friends with new packages coming in the mail
keeps the masses
coaxed and
the
still ready to pop in the next
musical
selection
on
the
freshly bought Christmas tiding ..

it's the way of the wolf
in
a
neighborhood full of dogs
and
a
murmuring of the cow
next to an avenue
butchering chickens,
it's
a
new
year and my girl asked me if I had any new
resolution to speak about ..

I told her
that
I made a resolution a while back
to not make the distinction of
making resolutions ..

for
a
floater
in a land of endless plans,
each
day is a resolution
and
to package all that up after the kiss
after the big ball's drop in the sky,
it's
something of a
land shark that

I'm ready to swim
after

without a towel
or
raft

to

grab
onto with
these
hard tailored

fingernails of
mine

as
the
traffic picks up a bit around here ..

so many songs

not much more
in here
than a bunch of songs
about everything
that's
making the cat
fucking
nuts ..

running,
railing,
slipping,
falling,
the songs
keep going ..

whether they're on
or
not,
the content keeps on going,
around
and
around
some plastic
disc
and
the cat is fucking losing
his mind
with
a
pink ball on the kitchen
floor,
but that's OK
I suppose
because
it's just a cat and
it likely has
8 more lives in tact after
this one ..

so,
as they speak about the universals play
on some disk,
the orchestra backs up the rock band,
the drugged voice
shouts for more drugs,
the harmonica sounds the end of the sojourn,
the corn was gobbled up by the green beans,
scared toes chased by frightened fingers,
the cat claws
are

scratching
at more

and
I can't even
hear

them
as
the
album
of your

choice

plays
over
and
over in this
house
here ..

some intelligent man

the man
calls
and leaves a message about
volunteering
at
my job ..

an hour later,
Pat is there waiting to talk to me ..

we sit down and the talk begins ..

he's from Silicon Valley (the bay area),
15 years in computers and electronics,
comes from a 6 figure job,
has been in the Army Reserves for the last 6 years,
specialty is military intelligence,
wants to come to the middle of Kansas to make a difference with the kids,
relocated to work military intelligence at a facility up the road,
talks about the military secrets and says that it's no big deal to talk
about it with folks ..

tells me
that they know about everything about you after swiping your driver's license,
soon we are going to interact with each other in a whole new way,
there are things we don't want to know about,
the military is invasive,
our government knows things about us that is almost criminal,
you get the picture ..

the man unfolds like some secret origami,
takes an application
and he's gone ..

haven't heard a lick from him for months ..

checked the computers to see if his name came up as a member,
nothing ..

asked around to see if anyone knew this man,
no one ..

told people the stories,
they were a bit surprised ..

yet,
I'm stuck with the phantom man that spooked me with what was supposed
to be military truth
the military intelligence man talking his walk and giving me a grand look over as
the time passes smoothly ..

still nothing,
I play the message over,
can't find this man's name anywhere ..

the gal tells me that she thought it was a tall tale
the man was weaving,
I was believing more than scoffing ..

I told this man that
my biggest government fears was
to be wrongfully framed for a large scale crime
and to ever know fully what the CIA does and has done ..

so,
this 'PAT'
character is still looming about
and out there,
if we can call him 'PAT' ..

chalk this one up
as another intelligence mystery
revealed,
folks ..

Sunday Healin'

cat in my
lap,
the sun
on the screen,
a car going in a blur I can't detail,
the thugs rest in their laurel of distinction
as
the
leg slips,
the lung coughs,
the singer ends the song,
the snake chases the rabbit,
the rat rests on the cheese slice
and
the
slinky
has

more bend around
here than
anything I have seen
for
a
while

as
the
airs remain calm,
a plane readies to go down the taxi lane
and

the
taxi driver
again
protests that he's going to
quit

his
job

and
never

drive
anything else again
over

this
land
of
damn

and
warmth ..

the clue was in her pants

left work,
pulled down the street
of
a
ghost town at night,
stopped at the red light,
saw a middle aged black woman with really curly hair
crawling up the street knocking on car door windows,
the van in front didn't budge,
she came to mine,
the light was a second from green,
she knocked on my window,
gave her the wave,
she went for the handle,
I pulled forward,
waved again,
drove off
and
wondered how high she was ..

sure,
come on in lady lets have a cup of coffee
and talk about the money,
rock,
blow job
or
other words you were going to lie on my path ..

traveling down this Baltic Ave. on
the monopoly board on a slightly OK Indiana Ave.
pay

as
the
world knocks
on
my car window

wanting a bit
to get to their Park Place ..

not here baby,
I don't even have a get out of jail free
card

and
that

makes us equal
as

this egalitarian drive

keeps on going
straight towards home

and
right into the middle of
an
evening of riddles and

whodunit mystery ..

the juror's wife

split with the judge
after a good blow
session
only
to run into the
guilt free criminal leaving the federal building
with
a
small grin
and
a
thought
to
pay a visit to the husband
that
was
ready to convict him
from the prosecutor's chair
as
the
taxi pulls close to the curb
waiting for the next verbal adventure

in
this land
ruled by law
and
entertained in the same
breath
by
the
exasperation
of
daytime,
nighttime,
morning time,
evening time,
court

drama

that never
ends

or
begins,
as far as this kid's matters are concerned ..

the paper weight on my shoulders ..

loose leaves in my teeth ..

pencil shavings waking
me by morning,
as the pen ink
poisons me by night ..

the
bane
and beauty of
the paper
weight
making
sure
nothing gets blown by the wind
or
lifted
by draught,
go
ahead and keep
my
jive
truncated ..

with the dictionary
and thesaurus
looking my way like a couple
of thugs
crackin' their knuckles,
I
have
the
paper weight on my side ..

sure,
the computer even has
things
that
are
going to get the words
right,
but the paper weight is all I need ..

the snow is thick

these feet have some things to think about,
the sky
has already fallen,
the girl wanted me to stay home from work,
just mopped up the cat's vomit as he howls for more
of my attention,
no one is at work,
the lunch bell is ready to ring as the Midwesterners crank up the radio
and ready to win cash,
cars are going by slower,
the coffee is staying about as warm as expected
as the thugs
trudge through the snow and think of warm weather crime
while the innocent get a little break in action
as the
man decides
he's not going to buy
that Cadillac
and stick his
family
the bill
when

he's done
and
gone on this planet
of
our

filling,
piling
up with all the snow
we can
take ..

the space she told me about

she woke
me
for
coffee and said that debris
was falling
over Dallas
and that NASA had lost contact
with
the space shuttle ..

new to the news
and
groggy from
the
dreamless sleep
that went down before me,
I said that
all the debris would burn up and no one
should get hailed down upon ..

then,
she said that
there were 7 people on board
and were concerned with
whether they were alive or not ..

shit,
I put on my underwear,
pants,
shirt
and
climbed out of the bed
to see the next
big
announcement of news over
the telecaster box ..

sure enough,
a
space shuttle had
exploded over Texas and was sending
a
sky made by Flash Gordon's Ming
down onto the ground ..

chaos
from space
as
we bobble around our own unrandom randomness
down
here ..

when the sky
is falling
there' few other places to resort ..

7 dead,
the sky
is collapsing
and
the news won't stop with video clips ..

the closest to a domestic Sept. 11
and
I wasn't even here for that ..

so,
I had my coffee,
gave the gal my camera for a trip she was taking
to Chicago
and
the

cups of coffee that would follow ..

some speculate
another terrorist attack,
the Pentagon is on the other end of the phone
as
we
humans here on the ground in KC
look at a warm day,
some good songs
and

something that will be pleasantly unexpected
as
the
second shuttle disaster in my lifetime
comes
raining down
from
the
room of that 8th Grade health class in 1986 and
Vietnam vet Dave Rebori
snarling a lugie
and
letting us know how
fucked and cracked human precision can
get

and
that's

just about
as
precise as

this
poem is going to get

about
now ..

THEY did it again

our center
at work was
broken into again ..

the third time in two years ..

in one of the poorest neighborhoods
in
Kansas

we're getting shit
swiped that
is around for the kids ..

they say
it's an inside job,
they say
it's not right,
they say
they'll change the locks,
they say
they will never get into the inside of the stolen computer,
they say
they're television watching will be shitty,
they say
they're food will never get warm enough in their microwaves,
they say
that they will be damned when they take a picture,
they say
that the pawn broker won't give them a fair monetary shake on what
they have,
they say
that their own children will watch them with speculative eyes
and scorn because these kids will know that they stole from the kids,
they say
their tires will go flat,
they say
that they may break in again because they likely have keys,
they say
that their girls may break up with them,
they say
that they may trip over an errant banana peel,
they say
their windows may be broken out,
they say
all these things ..

the 'THEY' ..

they say all these things
and
the only thing for certain is that

everyone remains 'THEY'
and
the
older I get

the more

I
find disdain with 'THEY'
and

what 'THEY'
have
to
say about
their 'THEY'
things ..

and if you run into 'THEY',
tell them 'WE'
know
who they are ..