



Joefiles LXXXIX

pounding paper like teeth on chewing gum

## **my great grandfather ralph**

from Naples, IT

was

one rough,

mean

and tough

son of a bitch.

he's the trickle down

to why my grandmother rose

has been the proverbial thorn

in

my

father's

side.

i've only seen

a

handful of pictures

and he

doesn't even

act as though

he

knows how to smile

a

bit.

i've heard few

stories,

but the one that

goes down in infamy

is

about his wife,

tessie.

as the story goes,

he was highly abusive

and

used to punch her

around all the time.

makes me wonder if

it was in his blood,

family past

or if coming over on a boat

to a new land was a predicate to his

sentencing on this planet.

his last breath

was acted in a swinging motion

towards his wife,

and then his bones landed back on the bed,

and pillow.

giving tessie a moment of ease.

giving me the few bits of  
great grandparentry story  
i have of my family.

## my spanish year

mrs. massey  
was  
my favorite  
teacher ever.

in the third grade,  
separated from  
all my core friends  
that  
helped me nearly flunk the 2nd grade,  
i had mrs. massey.

she called me jose.

i never knew until later that it  
was my name in spanish,  
but just thought it was a huge  
leap for an adult to take time out  
to care enough to weave together a new  
name for me.

and i loved her for that.

just that one moment as a kid  
made it worth it.

i don't remember her being a particularly great teacher,  
and she was a brute when she got mad.

also,  
i got exceptionally good grades.

but that was more from being separated from the  
scraggly hood kids like myself.

but it was her  
with that spanish moniker  
that may have  
ultimately saved my entire  
educational career  
with a little spanish novelty.

## **no explanation**

the  
plight  
of  
the  
explained  
is  
really  
inextricably  
unexplained  
as  
you  
go  
on  
explaining  
what  
you  
will  
never,  
ever  
explain.

## **no more luck**

man  
in  
the  
gray  
member's only  
jacket  
sways  
to  
sinatra's  
'luck be a lady tonight'  
in  
an  
empty,  
stench  
bar  
that  
would  
be  
lucky  
to  
have  
a  
photo  
of  
woman  
on  
the  
wall.

## **not sure about these new neighbors.**

they prowl.

crawl.

have biases.

they just stare.

they smile,  
but nothing is said.

when they talk,  
it's boring.

when they want something,  
they ask.

when they don't like something,  
they just look away.

like the neighbor next by,  
he has a good load of cheap whiskey,  
but his cheap shots with terms like WOP,  
and loud military punches on my arm at the  
end of a bad joke or metaphor  
is like swimming with the sharks  
and pretending there's no danger.

so,  
with the limited time i have for my wife,  
i'm gonna let the neighbors be neighbors,  
and i'll just stave and stick to  
my self  
here in  
the  
newly quartered  
suburbs  
that beats the hell  
out  
of  
the urban  
disdain  
every god damned  
day.

## **old milk lean**

can  
i  
push  
you  
into  
a  
pool  
of  
cold,  
bright  
yellow lemon  
yogurt?  
  
please.



**oohhh YEA!**

you  
have  
such  
cool  
bright  
red,  
artificial  
hair!

man  
and  
those  
black  
nails!

i  
bet  
your  
gonna  
vote  
for  
the  
green  
party  
candidate  
again,  
or  
maybe  
for  
the  
assorted  
other  
load  
of  
tens  
and  
tens  
of  
other  
political  
candidates  
in  
other  
parties.

and  
i  
bet  
you  
have  
great  
colorado  
dope!

jeez,  
your  
not  
like  
all  
the  
other  
girls!

you  
actually  
stand  
for  
something!

man,  
you  
know  
exactly  
what  
you're  
talking  
about!

everyone  
in  
this  
part  
of  
town  
wants  
to  
be  
just  
like  
you!

HOW  
ABOUT  
WE  
SIT  
AROUND  
DYING  
EACH  
OTHER'S  
BUTTHOLE  
HAIRS  
AND  
INTENDING  
IDEAS  
FOR  
NEW  
TAMPONS  
AS  
THE

POLITICOS  
SPEAK  
OVER  
YOUR  
BROKEN  
BUNNY  
RABBITED  
EAR  
TV  
AS  
WE  
NAIL  
THAT  
POT  
AND  
KEEP  
TALKING  
ABOUT  
WHAT  
WERE  
GONNA  
DO!

YEA,  
WHAT  
WERE  
GONNA  
DO!

YOUR  
SO  
FUCKING  
GOD  
DAMNED  
COOL,  
AREN'T  
YOU!

ALL  
WE  
NEED  
TO  
DO  
IS  
GET  
HIGH  
MORE  
OFTEN!

## out over change

my  
phone  
said  
the  
time  
was  
9-11  
as  
we  
peeled  
off  
of  
a  
memphis  
runway  
towards  
tampa,  
florida  
and  
a  
country  
that  
never  
go  
over  
a  
bunch  
of  
nail  
clippers  
and  
a  
bad  
war  
starting  
government.

## patriotic tale

ship  
me  
to  
spain  
and  
forget  
that  
i  
ever  
had  
ties  
to  
america.

sure,  
pack  
me  
in  
a  
wood  
smelling  
crate  
and  
get  
me  
off  
this  
rock  
of  
doom.

take  
me  
to  
the  
siesta,  
bulls,  
tanned  
skinnies,  
the  
meaning  
of  
relax,  
work,  
live  
into  
the  
night.

i  
don't  
need  
this

country  
no  
more.

do  
you  
ever  
really  
need  
a  
country.

my  
ignorant  
romance  
with  
spain.

the  
lover  
in  
blindness  
with  
every  
vision  
i  
crave.

go  
ahead,  
meet  
me  
in  
spain,  
baby.

## **picked apart**

the candied outer edge,  
licked the destroyed foil wrapper,  
complained that it was melted and didn't last that long,  
they told me too bad,  
come back tomorrow  
because they ran out and may possibly have some the next day  
as i walked away sucking the small bits of mixed  
dirt and chocolate from my fingernails  
as the sun was about to settle,  
and i just couldn't get the sight  
of that wasted candy out of my head,  
the expectations that i carried,  
the loss of my potential  
and then i realized that  
this is what it means anymore  
to vote in a democratically run election such  
as ours  
in the US.

## picture this

just took my  
40,000th picture  
yesterday  
and realized that most of my  
adult life has been consumed  
by pictures.

images of many i don't know,  
most i want to know,  
and some that i know all too well.

and then i realized  
what my first grade teacher told my  
mother at the end of the year  
about me having attention deficit disorder.

they said i was more inclined  
to learning through pictures,  
than with words.

so,  
i take pictures to catch up and  
to ensure that my forgetting memory doesn't catch up  
to my failing brain.

all my pictures,  
are actually stacks of binary words,  
and those binary bits are small numbers,  
and all those small numbers are the diagnoses  
are just tiny granules that lead to our  
ultimate diagnosis and  
illustration of this existence  
that can go with a picture,  
but maimed by explanation  
as our loud mouths  
go  
go  
go over the  
explained races.



## Polish Ben

at the YMCA front desk  
has the most  
cheatin' heart  
of a  
lover man  
i  
have  
ever met.

doesn't  
smoke  
but  
once in a while,  
delivers mail all day,  
drinks seldom,  
no drugs,  
some older kids,  
a sure smile  
and most  
people think  
he's  
either a protagonist  
or  
a meat head.

quite a big lad,  
he was one of the most  
brilliant political brains i had  
the  
chance  
to pick when  
i would  
walk towards my car  
after getting  
pelted  
by  
the kids during  
another day on  
the  
non-profit clock.

he chimed me in  
on how years of progressive politics are getting pealed away  
by the conservatives in washington  
and  
how he voted for McGovern in '72,  
the first year he could vote.

there  
were many key phrases and quotes  
he threw my way  
on the way to another way from work,  
and the barge of living,  
but

one of the most valuable  
things  
his brilliant  
mind lodged my way  
was  
that it's always been this way.

there has really been no change,  
just ripples.

and when you start  
thinking that it's all corrupt  
and you wanna give up,  
well  
there have been plenty others that have given up  
and soiled the cloth with your future blood.

whether you vote  
or not,  
it's only a choice,  
whether your candidate wins or loses,  
it's only gonna matter as long as you let it affect you  
and  
as far as i'm concerned,  
the only man i wanna vote for in the  
election  
is  
polish  
Ben with his big  
black starched lip.

## **pre-connect**

that  
one  
moment  
before  
a  
handshake  
is  
the  
beginning  
of  
everything  
called  
human  
interaction  
and  
it's the slight  
rise  
of heart rate,  
eye contact,  
knowing where you  
are going  
without watching,  
it's the epitome  
of you,  
and everything  
you  
blindly  
walk into and  
want  
later  
hope  
for  
resolution.

## **pretty ghetto afro brush**

in  
roadside  
gulch  
please  
don't  
take  
this  
the  
wrong  
way  
or  
think  
i'm  
being  
a  
racist,  
but  
if  
you  
were  
new  
and  
i  
had  
thick,  
curly  
hair,  
i  
would  
rub  
you  
through  
my  
scalp  
all  
smooth  
like  
a  
suburban  
criminal  
just  
out  
on  
a  
nightly  
stroll  
for  
mint chip  
bubble gum  
double  
cookie dough  
wrapped  
ice cream,  
baby.

## **publishing fame**

how about slathering  
my attempted bleeding heart all over the wall  
&  
pen out exactly  
what everyone  
else is penning  
in the pathetic,  
unrewarding realm of poetics  
and i can rest in my glowing newness of 'feeling' in  
writing and finally get published with the brilliance of those  
that always gets published,  
huh?

## **ravored edge**

i  
shaved  
my  
face  
for  
her  
and  
i  
think  
she  
promised  
over  
whiskey  
later  
that  
she  
was  
gonna  
break  
into  
the  
dc  
smithsonian  
to  
get  
me  
a  
piece  
of  
an  
actual  
moon  
rock  
for  
all  
of  
her  
well  
intentioned  
efforts.

## rock a by fly

i don't  
know where you came  
from,  
but you know exactly how to come up to my door,  
chip the paint,  
knock the housing down,  
how to get the ice cold,  
how to get the glass near my hand,  
how to convince me of theories,  
how the first gulp is eternal,  
how there doesn't seem to be an end when i'm doing it,  
but exhausting when i'm away from it,  
it has been applied a personality  
like a tornado or other weather pattern,  
and it's the whiskey in a glass,  
gin in a bottle,  
the other liquor that convinces us all that invincibility  
is forever  
and liquidity  
is  
the  
sea by which we rock this fucking lazy,  
small boat  
to sleep.

## **scottie**

in  
the  
produce  
section  
stacking  
celery,  
regurgitating  
the apples,  
looking over the  
onion  
shucks  
always  
had a pack of  
lucky strikes  
and  
always  
wanted to smoke with  
me.

he would talk about  
shoving  
a  
gun  
down the mouth of his ex-wife's  
lover at the time  
and  
watching the splayed lines of piss  
soil  
his pants before serving time  
in jail.

we would talk about his  
time  
as a navy man and  
having to fetch helmets from  
downed aircrafts and  
taking the piles of brain in the helmet  
as the only remaining piece for a soldier's  
funeral.

he talked religiously  
about his sorted trivia  
about his pack of luckies.

he was the only true  
cowboy,  
and the most sincere man i have  
ever worked with.

and his hallmark,  
famous phrase of  
**IT'LL COME OUT IN THE WARSH.'**  
was  
the truest thing i had ever heard.



one way or another,  
the man was an utter optimist  
and one tough son of a bitch.

last i heard about scottie,  
was that he had a tumor the size of a grapefruit  
in his head and his chances weren't good.

after hearing that,  
i felt like i was sucker punched without  
warning.

but,  
the man had a full,  
good life,  
and i would have like to have spent  
more of my life with him.

in fact,  
i used to joke about being his  
official biographer as a friend deed to him  
but he would always laugh and wave me off.

scottie,  
wherever you are,  
you smoke the right cigarette all those years.

you  
are one lucky damn strike  
in  
this  
wide dancing of living.

## settled sky

that  
drunk  
guy  
took  
a  
hard  
fall  
during  
a  
slow  
rush  
hour  
took  
a  
solid,  
good  
fall  
with  
grocery  
bags  
and  
beer  
in  
tow  
as  
the  
sun  
just  
kept  
slowly  
setting.

## shit poetry

with  
so  
many  
ways  
to  
poop  
it's  
just  
no  
wonder  
that  
people  
have  
an  
indelible  
knack,  
trick  
of  
crapping  
everything  
they  
touch  
and  
making  
most  
of  
it  
crumble  
to  
shit.

## small renowned mysteries

the  
joy  
of  
a  
returned  
post  
card  
in  
your  
own  
writing  
is  
as  
pleasing  
as  
not  
knowing  
the  
exactly,  
pin  
point  
source  
of  
those  
small  
gusts  
of  
wind.

## smartie candy eating boy

everyone  
just  
picked  
and  
picked  
on  
the  
kid  
in  
class  
that  
would  
never  
get  
on  
the  
internet  
because  
he  
wouldn't  
conform  
to  
the  
ways  
of  
the  
electronic  
sky  
in  
the  
classroom  
and  
everyone  
lost  
track  
of  
him  
after  
graduation.

the  
kid  
who  
never  
got  
on  
the  
internet  
made  
a  
fortune  
off  
web

commerce  
and  
blew  
it  
all  
on  
the  
biggest,  
most  
immaculate  
shelved  
library  
ever.

and  
now  
all  
those  
kids  
can  
read  
about  
it  
on  
the  
internet.

## smiley

i  
just  
gotta  
write  
about  
this  
dude,  
but  
what  
am i  
gonna write  
about  
him,  
i barely  
know  
him  
and  
forget  
about  
him  
a  
whole  
lot.

tonight my  
wife  
and  
i  
were  
having  
Vietnamese  
food  
when  
the  
guy  
known  
as  
smiley came through  
the  
doors.

i have  
met  
him  
with  
a  
handshake  
once,  
but  
we  
don't  
communicate  
when

we  
see  
each  
other in  
public.

he's  
39,  
lives  
on  
the  
couches of local rockers,  
has a 18 year old kid he  
doesn't  
talk too much  
and  
just  
doesn't talk much at all.

a flaring tattoo runs up his neck,  
he's aloof,  
corporated by his own personality,  
enjoys the idea of anarchy,  
dislikes government,  
likes Vietnamese food to go  
and  
always wears a black brimmed hat  
with a penchant  
for hanging  
our  
extensively  
in  
coffee houses.

but  
the  
last name i would ever expect  
he  
would  
be given  
is  
smiley.

how does  
a  
dude  
bent on the devil,  
anarchy  
and dark music  
get the moniker  
smiley?

does this dude need to be  
written about?

would



you  
be better off not knowing about him?

who  
do you really want to know about?

i  
be  
smiley  
would  
like  
to  
know.

## **socked up**

as  
long  
as you have  
the  
will  
to  
slide it across  
the table,  
i have  
the  
will  
to  
use  
it,  
slide  
it back,  
charge you  
and  
laugh  
when  
you  
leave  
with  
your  
lip  
swollen  
and  
shoes untied.

**steal my horseshoe set,**

place  
the shoes up around  
the  
entryways of your  
favorite  
friend  
and  
tell them to tread  
lightly  
across the floor  
as  
to  
not taint  
their  
luck  
and  
go  
get yourself  
a  
cricket  
or  
tennis  
set  
and  
fumble  
like  
a  
fuck  
as  
the  
silent  
steps  
go  
over  
the  
home  
floor.

## **stormers**

they closed  
the  
dorms down at the YMCA.

it was mainly a measure  
to keep the fat from the meat,  
and it was bound to happen.

all these guys resided in the  
slums of this town  
and were either professional gamblers,  
reformed alcoholics,  
current crack dealers,  
halfway cases,  
mental shots,  
crap rollers  
or genuine bullshit con artists so  
zooted out of their gourd  
the help they were getting could never  
outweigh the cost of maintenance  
and cops arriving on odd numbered days  
to take a several day old corpse out  
of an ungodly scented room.

but there is one man i  
think about.

i wonder how francis fared in the  
recent july 31 deadline.

he was a portly,  
small,  
bald headed man that always had a toothpick  
in mouth,  
a regular diner/eating routine,  
and a little mid 80's car he  
drove to and fro his regular day  
of doing.

he lived there for over 50 years  
and didn't disrupt a soul.

there was nothing hidden  
except the money he saved over all of  
those years.

he had to see that day coming.

it was either him getting carted out  
to the hospital,  
a morgue  
or on a chariot away from that  
burned down ruin chapel.

and it was the latter.

with the slant in his wisdom riddled  
eyes

I'm sure he set his  
bags of saved money on some strange  
drug addled intersection in  
the dead of night for an unassuming  
stranger that needs  
it

as he exits stage right onto  
some  
invisible space craft  
to another dimension  
because  
he  
was just too damn  
good for this  
one here.

## **sucker stuck**

where  
the  
hell  
is  
your  
sticker  
at?

someone  
in  
this  
new  
republican,  
whistle  
blowing  
society  
may  
just  
call  
the  
sticker  
police  
on  
you  
and  
all  
then  
you  
will  
find  
out  
how  
many  
other  
uses  
there  
are  
for  
electrical  
tape  
and  
duct  
tape,  
friends.

## **sunned over mountain**

old morning,  
new revelries,  
and the sandman is  
in my shoes,  
while the hoax of truth  
is in my innocent lie  
while the monkey covers his ears  
and the blind man walks joyously  
over the edge  
and this day has begun  
while yesterday ducked from the effects of  
the previous  
and i see now that i am going to be  
a married man come saturday  
and it doesn't hold the fling bling  
of all the others that are running madly  
to prove their love to others,  
so as the cone flowers wilt in the heat out front,  
the leather interior begins cracking,  
and the colors fade some more,  
this thought pyramid is for our baby isabella-myles  
and the woman who will be my wife  
as the thunder brews somewhere other than here this  
morning and the swoon of sunshine will be all  
over our foreheads  
at least for the remainder of today.

## **tanker man**

bullet  
red hot  
orange  
white tanker driver  
blaring over the road  
as all small  
ant cars  
and dullies  
get the  
shit out of the way  
of the fuel tanker driver  
with nails  
for lungs,  
and a hammer for a brain  
without the fear of gestation,  
or otherwise,  
he's the working guy with a  
bomb strapped to him  
like a rodeo belt  
buckle  
as  
he veers off the highway  
for a pee  
and some coffee  
at the  
quickest stop  
& for one  
moment  
Of  
respite  
before  
he  
straps the gun powder back on his  
morning  
waist.



## **taxi man dreams**

planted in the bottom  
of a whiskey bottle  
have more reserves of  
money than a mine full  
of coaled diamonds  
because you know there's more  
potential in the drunken  
heart of a foreign man  
trying to make an american wage  
than there is a brick of gold,  
dollop of silver,  
or the dirtied edges of a diamond cut from  
a guerrilla in some dead cave.

i feel like i'm the  
driver behind the circular saw  
as the whiskey cuts through my gullet  
and i glare through the incidents of dreams  
to find some commonalities  
between yesterday and today  
as the bottle ends,  
and the route comes to a stop,  
while the 'off duty' light flips  
on and the phosphorescent dots  
of the taxi man's future pelt all  
passing eyes as they wave for a ride  
and forget he's out of business,  
gleaming like a ruby going to  
a spot everyone will find out about in  
due time.

## **the best wing span**

no  
matter  
where  
i'm  
at  
on  
a  
flight,  
i  
always  
feel  
like  
i'm  
being  
strong-armed  
by  
the  
wing  
blocking  
all  
the  
quilt  
work  
of  
your  
homes.

## **the big crap off**

dudes  
off  
troost  
scavenging  
the  
bar's  
destroyed  
remnants  
as  
everyone  
else  
north  
of  
here  
hoard  
their  
credit  
around  
like  
vigilantes  
without  
a  
quarter  
in  
their  
name  
and  
an  
empty  
garage  
to  
fill.

## **the catholics**

are collapsing  
in  
down around me  
as  
the clerics  
shout  
for  
religious  
separation  
and  
all the factions  
of  
fractoidal  
religiosity  
squabble  
below  
in  
the worst of kindred  
bonding,  
and best of  
the news  
we pay in blood  
to ingest  
like  
blind,  
indignant  
kids  
who never had a shot  
at  
any sort of reputable  
knowledge.

## **the J18867 light pole**

on  
the  
south  
end  
of  
kansas  
city  
knows  
where  
all  
the  
buried  
treasure  
is  
hidden  
if  
it  
hasn't  
already  
been  
stolen  
by  
another  
light  
pole.

## **the man with the muffled voice**

forces everyone to not ask 'what'  
because he  
inoculates all his words on contact  
loved to talk to mike p.  
about all his vietnam stories and how  
he hated the fuck out of jane f.  
and how he surfed and surfed over the useless  
web sites out there because someone  
had to at least see a site once to validate  
its existence and he decided that  
if he could ruin a good sentence with poor  
syntax,  
then he was going to validate a shit pot  
of strangers out there trying to tie  
their digital soul together with  
tiny electronic bits of ribbon  
for the survivors of all wars  
to look on and realize that the only way  
to be alone  
is to be completely alone and with  
your home brewed sense of language.

## **the old white woman**

was just chewing on that morning  
light like a stack of taffy sticks  
as the small,  
overworked mexican man squinted her way with a wry smile  
trying to understand her spit induced yelling fit  
while his shovel dipped a bit,  
remembering his old mom back in Mexico,  
and his girlfriend the bottle in America,  
and just took her chaw for all it was worth because  
he loves this god damned country  
no matter who comes stumbling out of it  
just yelling orders that this little  
mexican hardly understands because he's still learning  
her shtick, reluctantly,  
but all his teacher's said he had a high learning curve  
as a kid  
as the old woman ends her fiasco,  
& with the hum of loud, fast  
traffic  
she slips back into the slit of her front door  
as the Mexican watches a car load of potential Friday nighters  
go up State Avenue as he smiles  
a broad sturdy human alive look.

## **the pine tree people**

hinder  
on the side of  
the  
rushed traffic  
hour  
on their red blanket,  
faces just awoken,  
while the chips and  
sandwiches  
hope for their  
rich  
arrival  
and  
the  
teamsters are gearing up  
for the election  
and  
the  
president's are all driving by  
in their tinted  
glass  
as  
the two  
off  
their  
pined hide out  
know  
they have  
the freest  
view going  
and  
they don't need anyone  
bothering them,  
or writing about  
it,  
if you may.



## **the pope's**

still

stuck

in

rome

as

the

brain

of

my

developing

boy

is

in

my

caroline's

belly.

## **the quasi FBI/COP/DOCTOR**

looking  
mane  
flat  
demure  
with  
flickering  
waiting room  
lights  
makes  
me  
want  
to  
ask  
questions,  
but  
i  
know  
in short time  
he's  
gonna  
be asking  
all  
the  
questions  
and  
the  
chance  
that anyone will  
truly  
remember any of this will  
be so nil  
that  
the  
only thing  
left for any of us after the hunt for  
an innocent antagonist in this tryst  
will  
be to find out  
if  
this FBI/COP/DOCTOR  
is  
but  
just  
a  
small,  
tiny  
fraudulent  
of  
a  
man.

## **the red rag in the middle of the street**

&

those

servants that ate

all your

soda crackers

are

still held in

the eye of the

courts for a crime

they wanted to commit,

but couldn't

find the time to

because time was not their

friend

and the setting was a plot

against

their

innocent

theme

to

get

out,

away

on

on

on

with

their

long

lost

and

exasperated

bag

of

precious

yellow

wool rags.

**the shadow birds leaning,**

lurching  
over the highway  
are  
coming  
to  
drain  
your  
change  
drawers,  
and  
errant  
coin  
bins  
to  
buy  
their  
own  
homes  
and  
bother  
you  
with  
all  
their  
sorts  
of  
trash.

## **the threads of insanity**

are  
loosely  
held  
together,  
but  
are  
the  
strongest  
things  
on  
this  
here  
planet  
of  
ours.

**the wave of a flimsy pie pan in a wind tunnel,**

or  
the  
hand extended out  
swinging  
an  
thin  
hollowed out  
aluminum  
tubing  
and  
there  
you  
are  
with  
the  
sound of your  
own  
future  
baby's  
heartbeat  
resonating  
through  
your  
ears  
and  
I  
have  
begun  
to  
understand  
my  
ascension  
towards  
god  
and  
readying  
my  
brain  
for  
when  
god  
will  
cough  
hard  
and  
knock  
me  
over once  
that  
heart beat  
is  
closer,  
closer  
to

me.

## **toxic roxanne**

lived  
up the street  
from  
us  
as  
kids  
growing  
up  
in  
the lime green  
duplex  
at  
821 n. ridge.

she  
was the vixen with frost blond,  
brown streaked hair  
making out with all the boys  
or getting finger banged behind the  
pine tree line in the neighbors yard  
as her exceedingly old looking father  
pines over the kitchen table  
while  
the police sing 'roxxaannnee'  
over the  
radio  
box  
and  
our  
beloved  
roxanne  
emerges  
from  
the  
pine line  
with an unbuttoned pant,  
smeared lip stick,  
and  
a  
smile  
on her  
face  
because  
she  
lost  
her  
scent in the noblest  
of  
all  
devious teen ventures  
as  
her  
boy toy for the  
eve



goes  
running over the gravel rock of our  
back driveway  
up through the woods  
in  
the  
the mysterious,  
deep  
world.

## **trouble maker**

watch out,  
your  
off the balance  
neo-brilliance  
is  
gonna get the world  
in  
trouble some say day,  
so before you  
come abouts waggin' tha finger  
with  
your particular smarts  
about the soviets and bin laden,  
the false wars in history,  
the information we don't but should know,  
how we are run be a crew that we never see,  
that we know that which as been graciously given to us by soft hands and mush brains,  
before you start spouting color streaks from your tonsil reach,  
just know that you may destroy the world some day  
and it will go down as one of the most amazing mercy mission against now that we will ever have the  
chance to remember,  
suckers.

## under my pillow

i just don't have  
that much  
time but  
i want to keep on going until my eyes  
ach like the dirty wrecking ball hovering over the  
11th street bar getting to its demolished core,  
but i have to tell her that i love her like the first week  
i used to avoid whiskey to think of her more clearly,  
then simultaneously drink the potion to remember how  
her big toes sounded grating over my  
dirtied attic sheets  
and there is the sound of gum balls falling and rolling over  
the floor with their perfect,  
spherical sugar clusters going a clank,  
clank,  
clunk over the dusk of my  
elbow skins  
and i think there is a distinct possibility  
that i may never go to be because the writers  
are all burning logs at night  
to end the plight of prose  
and there  
and then we will be stuck with a history  
no one will ever read,  
and if they do  
you can finally be proud  
up to your blood lids that  
something  
other than me,  
but that was a part of me  
finally  
laid  
down  
and got  
some god damned sleep.

## verse versus verse

play  
my  
flute,  
baby,  
and  
i  
may just  
see  
what  
i  
can  
do  
about  
running  
my  
tired  
fingers  
over  
your  
organ.

## **waiting**

i  
wait  
for  
the  
late  
night  
nothings  
in  
the  
top  
shelf  
bin  
of  
my  
caroline's  
big,  
flush  
brain.

## want to examine the psychological path from one beginning to another?

when i woke tomorrow  
i remembered that i broke  
all of my plans with various friends because  
i wanted to spend time with my almost wife  
and didn't want to discuss a marriage  
that was really supposed to be an elopement,  
but it didn't work that way,  
so after making my mother cry on the phone  
because of my pathetic sister and her potential  
actions i had to tell my brother not to come to  
my wedding and he and his wife are one  
of the few that deserve to be there,  
then i climbed into the jeep and started my drive  
to work thinking about how i had a dream the evening  
before and my boss had called in a bright, cheerful  
mode asking me about what time i was going  
to come into work and if i was maximizing my time under  
his pay clock and then i would look around and remember  
how amazing the sky the morning before looked with its marshmallow  
clusters of swirling gray looking like the pre-thunder or tornado  
cell but amazingly memorable with its ways  
then i remember the look of the industrial part of the city  
humming and one big exhaust pipe pumping white smoke into the air  
and it looked like the whites of eye balls of passing  
motorists all with the same expressions  
and then i get to work and -

you getting  
the  
idea like a stripe in the middle of  
the road,  
splitting the hemispheres,  
making the world a big libra of equality  
or  
should i go on my way and make  
my day  
your  
day  
and the psychological path  
that  
never ends  
it  
only  
deepens into pathological  
as we  
go and  
we are  
all completely guilty of that  
one.

## wanter

i  
need  
you  
to  
need  
yourself  
in  
a  
way  
that  
isn't  
yourself,  
or  
me,  
or  
them,  
or  
a  
cat,  
or  
a  
dog,  
but  
just  
an  
inanimate  
us  
as  
you  
continue  
kneading  
all  
over  
the  
proverbial  
one.

## **warm weather bastardized criminals**

all  
tell  
each  
other  
the  
truth  
and  
refuse  
to  
steal  
from  
each  
other  
as  
the  
whole  
lot  
of  
us  
wait,  
and  
become  
the  
victimless  
victims  
in  
their  
jagged  
dance  
as  
the  
net  
waits  
hoisted  
in  
those  
thick,  
jail  
looking  
clouds  
on  
hot  
august  
days  
for  
the  
last  
guy  
in  
line  
to  
pull  
the  
fucking



lever  
on  
their  
slinking.

**we do it to ourselves,**

did it to ourselves

and continue to do it to

everyone else as you go on

about how

you don't need to depend

on men

while my good friend phil c.

takes his little pal peaches out on

a lunch date

as i think

why is it all about volume and

just

where in

the fuck

did the quality go?

## **what are you in the label game?**

an empty carrot stick.

7-UP wrapper.

the beginning of the rainbow.

the theorist with 100's of stickers on the car.

a bushite with nothing but a bible and infomercials to quote.

a radical with a cage around your apartment windows.

the vegan with bad skin and pure white urine.

where is your labeled can at?

how did you get your label?

do you need a label?

tell you what,  
mail me your label and I'll trade it in for  
points on  
your next purchase.

sure,  
we have a point system,  
but we  
don't have a label  
or  
do we?

## **white horse**

looks

me

in

the

eye

like

i'm

his

brother

as

i

siphon

down

a

box

of

old

sugar

candy

rocks

and

approach

him

all

slow

like

as

his

eye

lids

begin

falling

quickly.

## **who are these indispensable 1's in the world**

with  
their  
shades  
drawn,  
no  
social plans,  
few,  
if any,  
friends,  
bad hygiene,  
end of the world  
theorists,  
with their black  
banners  
and  
talk of how it's only  
going to go  
as  
far as it's supposed to  
and  
when the sky rains  
salty blood  
it will  
be  
then  
that  
all of us will finally understand  
what  
strength  
is  
and  
not  
a  
second  
sooner  
than  
that.

## **who do you got?**

if  
you  
have  
a  
story  
i  
will  
cease  
to  
yawn  
&  
we  
can  
just  
stay  
up  
all  
the  
fucking  
time  
with  
all  
these  
interesting  
things  
to  
be  
spilled.

## who's bombing the Tigris and Euphrates now?

oh  
yea,  
that  
country  
with  
50  
states,  
several  
commonwealths,  
that  
believe  
they  
hold  
the  
key  
to  
democracy,  
freedom,  
open  
diplomacy,  
and  
the  
best  
religion  
in  
the  
cereal  
aisle.

sure,  
it  
was  
the  
country  
that  
knows  
exactly  
what  
to  
do.

they  
treat  
their  
people  
so  
well.

everyone  
has  
health  
coverage,  
and

most  
of  
the  
people  
are  
wealthy  
and  
all  
christians  
are  
models  
of  
divine  
happiness.

so  
go  
ahead  
and  
keep  
on  
bombing.

we're  
sure  
your  
divine  
stewardship  
can  
handle  
the  
ego  
to  
destroy  
civilizations  
initial  
etchings  
on  
this  
planet.

sure,  
big  
strong  
country,  
you  
know  
best.



## wintery summer smile

i  
found  
you  
the  
other  
damn  
day  
and  
if  
the  
bloody  
truth  
be  
known,  
you  
didn't  
even  
know  
your  
own  
damn  
self.

when  
this  
winter  
leaves,  
the  
eyes  
will  
gladly  
droop  
inward  
and  
remain  
brittle  
as  
dry  
bones  
and  
as  
fierce  
as  
the  
back  
molar  
of  
a  
weak  
black  
panther  
mouth  
bite.

## woman leaf specimens

in  
the  
early  
morning  
pile  
yard  
are  
your  
wiggled  
wagged  
lines  
of  
steam  
coming  
up  
off  
your  
finely  
pressed  
coffee  
cup  
as  
morning  
shakes  
off  
last  
nights  
lie.

yellow  
ribbons  
all  
around  
trees,  
street  
light  
lamp  
posts,  
bridge  
pillars,  
cat's  
tails,  
dog  
noses,  
human  
legs  
as  
the  
poor  
iraq  
afghanistan  
war on terror  
soldiers  
swim

through  
sticks of  
melted  
glue  
they  
may  
never  
know  
how  
to  
peel  
off.

## **work backwards**

dip  
me  
in  
sugar  
and  
throw  
me  
out  
to  
the  
salts,  
i'm  
ready  
to  
begin.

## **you middle of the night walkers**

with  
your  
single spaced  
wills  
looking  
for the train  
to  
come  
but hoping that a passing  
motorist  
comes  
and  
takes  
you  
away  
from  
all the words  
that  
never  
got  
you any further  
had  
they  
never come out  
of your flying fingers,  
but if you want to  
test this life,  
then go ahead  
and look  
straight into the ghost  
lamp of the train caboose  
and  
hope  
the  
future  
looks  
better  
than  
what  
you did  
the entirety of your  
willed existence.

## modern techno quackery

the  
escapade  
of the  
artificial  
deal  
in  
the  
cyber  
plexed  
hexed  
complex  
is  
a  
small,  
squirmy  
floppy  
disk  
stuck  
on  
the  
underneath  
of  
my  
rubber  
synthetic  
shoe  
sole  
that  
i  
cannot  
shake  
no  
matter  
how  
hard  
i  
convince  
my  
head  
to  
just  
fucking  
disconnect.

## **mr. earth tanned**

that  
man in the  
rained on  
tan  
trench coat  
and brimmed hat  
lookin' over  
the bar  
like a  
savior maverick  
is  
just  
another unlucky  
son of a bitch  
lucky enough  
to  
have found enough luck  
in his life  
to not want  
too much of that  
luck  
to ruin everything  
with.