



## JoeFiles LXXI

workin' the market like a common villain

## teddy and Malcolm with a drink

I was talkin' to a cat  
from the Bronx  
and on the DC subway,  
he told me,  
a man in his upper 40's  
that the first place  
he ever had a drink was in Harlem  
at  
the  
place that Malcolm X was killed ..

straight in his delivery  
and  
serious about explainin' his drink correct ..

it was a Johnnie Walker Black label  
drink on the rocks ..

as a black man,  
he mulled over the mountains he has seen  
and  
the  
valley's he has sewed shut ..

jolly as a man  
from the bondage of zebra stripes and all the such ..

he  
just  
threw out this fact as though  
no one for years had heard of would believe  
and  
had finally had someone in his  
lurch  
that would actually care and lend  
an  
ear

to the pen

or something a little bit more ..

## that night

had to get  
the piss out of  
my  
lower bones ..

turned into the  
new,  
bright fall sun  
morning

and  
fell out of bed ..

bouncin' down the narrow chute of steps,  
piss gone ..

then,  
I laid down to whirl around a bit  
before getting  
on  
with the cup of coffee ..

then,  
the door opens downstairs ..

the sound of keys,  
bump,  
clank,  
shootin' around ..

thought it was the landlord  
coming in for a tweak  
or  
to look  
at the friggin' toilet again ..

I listened,  
Jelly Roll was playin' low  
and was gettin' the sounds confused ..

looked out,  
it was the gal ..

she came in to make me some coffee and  
bring a bag  
of  
items her mom got  
for  
the  
30th that just

went by ..

I have a robe now,  
a quality gal

and  
a  
cat layin'  
in front of the keyboard ..

if the bus stop is coming up,  
I think  
I'm going  
to  
stay on this ride for a bit ..

**that's soooooo dope**

they say  
the town is  
dry  
on dope ..

the DEA has billboards  
around the area,  
I hear,  
telling everyone that they are  
fucked  
if  
they need to get the grass high ..

there's a crack down  
and  
apparently its working ..

always wondered about  
how they were fighting this war  
on drugs ..

you know,  
millions has gone in and  
everyone around here seems to find  
a  
valid way to get high on the grass,  
pills,  
sheets  
or  
needle ..

people walk around  
bombed day after day  
and  
there is an epicenter where it all comes in ..

so as my neighbor,  
the man riding his bike up the street,  
the house across the way  
and people lining the street  
march around maddened by the  
lack  
of

dope  
in  
the  
streets

I  
see

that  
all  
that  
money

may actually  
be working

here  
in  
the  
hard ass streets ..

## **the funny**

the funny ones  
are always twisted ..

the funny ones have at least  
multiple habits of destruction ..

the funny ones always  
have their eyes on you  
& your habits even  
when they aren't lookin' up ..

the funny ones are on your  
block with a squirrely car  
or no car at all ..

the funny ones recycle very old produce  
in the fridge  
for comedy sake ..

the funny ones know about  
your nails and have  
some insight on your toes ..

the funny are non-smokin' smokers  
with a penchant  
for the broken ..

the funny are usually only recognized  
by the mutually funny,  
those that were at one time  
or

are  
destined to be ..

## THE LAST OF OCTOBER

slap me on a  
haunted hayride  
and throw me into that old  
show  
we  
used to talk about ..

sew the buttons loose,  
kill all the lights  
and  
lets go back to  
the  
way we used to roll ..

turn the music to a decibel only a few  
can  
hold  
and  
lets make it loud

like loud never heard before ..

put the cat away,  
bring the dogs  
out  
and  
let's dance  
like

dancing was something from a hit 80's film  
we're still tryin'  
to  
figure out ..

put out the cigarette  
and  
sell the drug dealer off at an auction,  
time  
is  
running  
low

around  
here

cause the kids have given up on  
Halloween  
and

if there's anything that is more indicative  
of



the  
times now

than kids not  
walking about looking for candy straps

it's

the  
absence of those kids outside

at  
6:15 in  
the  
hood ..

## the no name girl

my own shit smell from  
the bottom hole  
is nearly scarin' me  
from this seat  
I sit in on the porch  
while  
the night tries to team with  
the smell of comin' rain  
&  
the arrival of one selfish girl  
that means about as little to me  
as it  
does  
you ..

so,  
it's no  
good

to even mention her  
name ..

## **the way of the drag**

a drag could be a race,  
or pulling something along the ground,  
or underwater - like a grate or a net,  
or it could be a queen,  
or a 'net' as in 'dragnet',  
it can also be a bad cup of soup,  
cold bath water on a frigid day,  
the way we slave to go week to week on our pay stubs,  
the hole in your socks when there's also a hole  
in the bottom of your shoes,  
the dragnet went after the drag queen who  
is a professional tough guy drag racer by day ..

though,  
the dragnet went after the drag queen to see  
if he had dragged the bottom of the river clean ..

END OF SCENE 4 ..

(don't want to keep draggin along)

## **the world is a big pink fat balloon**

and  
we can only handle  
about  
1 hero a day

as  
the  
housewife soaks  
the  
toes in epson spring ..

the world is  
floating away in a pink blur of helium  
and  
we  
take all the mashed stories of tragedy and  
swallow  
them up  
in hopes that we will finally get the point,  
picture  
or inspiration

that  
one  
balloon  
going  
over  
the

bobbing heads on  
the  
ground

should

give  
by  
just being

a  
pink ball  
that

has  
an  
author

which is not known  
or  
heard of over our nightly cup of coffee ..

**there was no place  
to drink in DC**

that was going to satisfy  
some cats  
from  
KC - LA - NY ..

nothing ..

just a couple of drinks in a  
alt dive  
that seemed to have promise  
until the others lifted their eyes  
at  
the  
passing ladies and what could potentially go down ..

the sniper is on the loose,  
the cat has the dog's tail in its eye  
and  
it's nothing but  
standard fare in the nation's capital  
as

the  
monuments twist and the honor  
of  
the  
wren's smirk  
stands as the one thing between  
here

and  
Jupiter ..

## **there was only one moment in DC**

when I had to chap  
the ass of the kid I took up there to  
be a part  
of  
a  
cool experience in the nation's capitol ..

we were standing on the steps  
of the Capitol Building  
when this kid  
started yelling at several Park Service security guards  
standing  
atop the steps  
making sure that people kept their cool and distance ..

he kept yelling that he wanted to come  
up and see the building as one security guard  
kept nodding a clean and clear 'NO' ..

I watched him for a bit  
and  
then flew in with my own verbal onslaught ..

'NO MORE,'  
I began.  
'YOU'RE FUCKING WITH COUNTRY READY TO GO TO WAR AGAIN AND UNDER SOME  
DIRESS. LEAVE IT BE.'

He looked back at me  
and  
made his way down ..

with some dough eyes  
and  
an ashamed look  
as  
though

his  
friends would think he wasn't as  
hip  
as  
he could be ..

it didn't faze me ..

something happens to you when you  
know a bit more than a kid  
and  
it

comes out just as quick when you aren't even  
thinkin'  
about it ..

**these people around here  
walk in the  
middle of the street ..**

&  
fuck  
it's refreshin' ..

the pedestrians  
rulin'  
the  
concrete roost  
as

the cars  
slow,  
swerve,  
nick,  
duck  
and  
fly  
about  
for a new way

to get

wherever they  
are  
speedin'  
like  
mother mad  
to  
meet up with

some  
slow

folk

who are likely walkin'  
up  
the  
middle of the street to where they're goin' ..

## **they speak of random tyranny ..**

yet,  
I see that the ground still stays wet the same way,  
rain comes down straight  
and  
the mud slinging has slight bends this or that way  
that is nothing different from what I have seen before ..

so,  
this random tyranny seems  
about  
par for course,  
if you ask me ..

and if there wasn't this randomness of the tyranny  
it  
may be too much of a drag to get out and

listen to the  
news

as  
we listen to it now ..



## **took some intestinal mix**

last  
night that should clean me out all good  
and  
solid ..

had my first moment  
of  
many I should have on the toilet  
this morning ..

cleaning out my snake  
and  
dislodging the long ago  
forgotten meats  
that  
clogged my pores ..

I gurgle now  
and  
delight at a house full of toilet paper  
and  
potential

as  
the  
morning coffee  
and  
cigarette

only act

as surrogates in what  
will,  
has

and  
should happen  
along

this shit path

of mine

on halloween 2002 ..

## **what I remembered in the morning**

I dreamed of fetchin' beer  
with an old friend,  
catchin' the passion fish that was translucent going down  
the  
crazy little salt water stream behind the Leave it to Beaver  
home  
as  
Wally stayed locked in the bathroom  
to  
jerk her off out of  
his  
oblivion of pleasure ..

sure,  
there were dreams of an old fat man  
falling back in his chair  
as he headed to the bathroom ..

regaining composure,  
he pulled a beer in a shaky nuisance  
to his  
lips  
and  
went on his way out of that dream segment ..

the  
other messengers  
out on call,  
the notes stackin' up in the mailbox  
as

I tell the  
familiar  
that  
if I don't answer the door,  
I'll be  
in  
the  
shitter  
or  
dreamin'  
of

other ways  
to  
shit out a good one,  
folks ..

## 1st Day of October

bringin' the fish vase down  
the steps,  
the phones ringin',  
pager buzzin',  
the gal says sorry for blowin' the evenin' off,  
it's OK I tell her,  
then the door bell sounds ..

my neighbor is at the door,  
he says his temporary live-in  
has the keys,  
different schedule,  
says he went to court with the woman with the oxygen tank  
across the street to testify  
against  
a neighbor shootin' a gun  
off on a Saturday afternoon  
into the starch white air ..

they missed his appearance  
in court ..

he pled guilty,  
the cops are calling him their pet project  
and he's close to movin' out ..

-GOOD-

the kid's a fuckin' nuisance  
and the morning suddenly sounds  
much  
better for us two  
and

the rest of you 2 out there ..

## **7pm robbery**

*went to the coffeehouse  
to see a friend  
and  
personally respond  
to  
a call earlier in the day ..*

*she wants  
the lady friend and I to meet her  
for  
a  
rock show on Friday night ..*

*I approach the coffee hut  
as the teams of people enter lookin'  
for  
caffeine  
and  
somethin' to fill their eve ..*

*it's hoppin' with coffee filters  
and  
the faces of local dreamers,  
as  
I approach my friend  
and  
hear about how she just got robbed  
about an hour prior ..*

*a man came in,  
ordered a cup of coffee  
then  
flashed a gun and said that he wasn't fuckin' around ..*

*he wanted all the money,  
she handed it over  
and*

*I told her that I just wanted a 12 oz. cup of  
house blend ..*

*she appeared unfretted,  
little stone faced,  
done talkin' about it  
as*

*she continued to think about the scrawny white man  
that  
stole a part of her night ..*

*as  
he  
sit around tryin'  
to*

*just give  
it  
back to her in any small way we can ..*

9/5/02

yelpin' dogs,  
the taco is done,  
the breath of a valet parker  
as evenin' creeps  
into the day's veins ..

we see the world  
at a view and  
wonder how  
it's all gonna be  
interpreted  
in  
the  
morn  
morn  
mornin' ..

10-8-2002

ted nugent shooting  
a flaming  
arrow  
at  
the  
nugget bar  
as  
the  
kids  
run around the trolley wondering where the engine is  
and  
how it runs so smooth ..

leonard on the radio,  
c00l morning air coming  
through  
and  
the  
coffee is breathing  
like  
it's in alaska  
as

the  
next wish we wish for  
here  
is

one more  
tune

and  
for  
the  
work phone will disappear ..

**10-3-2002 / FLIGHT 581**  
**KANSAS CITY TO DES MOINES TO WASHINGTON DC - REAGAN NATIONAL**

Between the clouds around the 1PM day  
goin' by ..

- the cartoonist will be jerkin off
- a girl will fuck the stupid fucker in a magazine
- the senators will be eating food I can't afford on a good pay week
- the twist and turn of the plane will make the young 17-year old novice wince and poke his eyes out further
- the harpist will play in the piano festival
- the wallaby will dream of eating a whole damn coconut tree
- all the flights of my life come back
- my miracle woman back home confounds and amazes me in the same synapse squirt
- space is the matter above us - not between us
- my insane KC neighborhood will undoubtedly light up like rocket fuel while gone
- my fish may never know my first name as I decide to not give him a middle or last
- the horror fiction writer in Kansas dreams of strangling a young dead calf back to life
- the finale is only the beginning in the country gettin' ready to run that new, advertised carnival
- gettin' away is like never leavin' - if you convince yourself of it
- a young man ready to experience travel for the first time is like fuckin' a virgin on prom night reunion when you're 32
- captain has indicated a final descent into Des Moines and one more joke in the belly of this vessel to be expelled joyously on all Iowans
- memories of the magazine byline I just read has already left me
- the post 9-11 world made the 17-year old I'm chaperoning to DC take off his shoes, coat and pet to be put through a wand metal detector
- I'm so fuckin' hungry that my nails are hurrying to run off my damn hands
- faith is learned - not taught
- crusted donut shavings on the face of a pallid clown
- doin' a u-turn in a fryin' pan shaped town
- girls watchin' talk shows as the boys go out to buy some new jerk off material at the jerk off store down the way
- big surprises in store for little Texas
- businessmen flap the pages of the newspaper faster and faster as we descend to the Iowa ground - wantin' to read about the world as it passes in a void of big, white shelf clouds
- the teenager pokin' his ears closed as we land in the land of pigs/grain and some 8-track players that work
- the only way to see the sun on a gray, cloudy day is to fly - fly above the cloud shelf, fart and put some shades on
- the turbulence is when nothin' else is goin' on
- the just boiled cabbage and put a rabbit's foot around the unlucky rabbi's neck
- if you believed in my measures and directions why did you buy me a ruler and compass?
- more mail gets lost in the system than Mary Tyler Moore catches that twirlin', spinnin' hat
- local celebrity meets local dog owner with a twinkle
- rattlesnake gets bitten by a gardner snake
- straight bloody mary mix on a flight just takes away all thought of vodka or other hard booze
- for some reason I piss flight attendants off - just had the gal pourin' folks wine throw a snarl when I asked why I didn't get any as she asked, 'ARE YOU 21?' I just laughed
- the fuckin' kids just love all this new rock-n-rap vomit for some reason
- you know, those books with large letters and big type for older folks should be given to people all the time so our eyes don't go to shit when we're older



I blew out thirty  
candles  
on  
top of a  
chocolate  
cake

with a can of Schlitz next  
to me

for  
the after moment ..

and it hit me,  
there are people that I have talked to and heard  
about  
that  
flip  
their switch to OFF when  
the  
30th comes around ..

and earlier in the day,  
before the chocolate and hops,  
I realized  
that  
I thought seriously about  
being thirty for a span of a couple minutes  
before it  
left me

and  
the red,  
yellow,  
green,  
black,  
blue,  
orange  
and  
gray

colors of cars  
streamed past me,  
I raced past them

and  
we were all different ages ..

maybe some were the same,  
others older,

much younger

and  
that

is about

the most of that thought ..

just too fucking  
young

to let  
the calendar  
be

that important ..

**10-8-99+2 Naughts**

Retractable pens,  
nuts from the hills  
takin' people out ..

Seems like I always  
have a way of walkin' into  
or bein' swirled by excitement ..

the dangerous excitement ..

entertainment on the tan walls  
&  
the toothpicks between us ..

the TV talks of a killer on the loose  
as the innocent  
slip under  
J. Baldwin's quote ..

'THE INNOCENCE CONSTITUTES THE CRIME.'

I'm innocent  
on a guilty globe  
and

that's

all ..

## **a good night for a walk ..**

sure,  
a good night  
for  
a  
talk about walkin' ..

fine evenin' for  
a  
walk around the block  
while  
thinkin' about walkin' some more ..

sure,  
so  
as  
I sit  
and  
talk  
about

the  
walk,  
I  
should

get up here  
soon

and  
do  
that walk  
I talk  
about  
as  
the  
evenin' waits for some  
walk talk ..

## A TRIP TO THE TRIP

we finally whittled our trip during  
the  
week of Sept. 11th  
down to the  
barest of breast and bone possible ..

went from  
Galveston, Texas,  
to Duluth, Minnesota,  
Three Fires National Park, Iowa  
to  
a  
lake about 30 minutes from here ..

it's all the same  
in love and war ..

when you're around a body of water,  
trees,  
dirt,  
fire  
and such,  
you mind as well be many minutes and miles  
away from comfortable  
and  
familiar surroundings ..

so,  
one of the highlights  
was the 'GREENVILLE COUNTRY STORE' ..

a little sundry and beer joint  
a jaunt down the road  
from the camp site ..

my first night goin' in,  
the smell of stale smoke even smashed my lungs harshly  
as  
the man with no front teeth behind the counter was playin'  
chess  
with a local  
tuggin' on a can of Busch Light ..

I asked him where the camp sites were out on our first night ..

he gave us the  
directions  
as  
I caught a glimpse of the only lady in  
the place

standing behind the counter  
oblivious  
the  
much of the world outside her screen doored job ..

the next day,  
went in for a USA Today and  
they looked at me dumbfounded ..

paid about \$12 for a chincy 12 pack of beer ..

went in one day to ask for directions out of town  
to get the kid some toys and the girl  
knew exactly where the Wal-Mart was down the street ..

the next day,  
she had a small squirrel sleepin' in her hand  
with milk formula all over the counter  
while  
her  
friend or lover  
sat at the counter,  
the old chess mate,  
with a shirt that said - 'HOLD MY BEER WHILE I KISS YOUR GIRLFRIEND' ..

they didn't have  
a  
lot  
to  
say ..

the last visit was  
the morning of my lover's birthday ..

I slipped away to the shitter  
and  
yonder to get her a birthday card ..

every time I asked the chess playin' owner for something in his place,  
he said he didn't have it ..

no birthday cards,  
no playin' cards,  
no paper,  
no other brand of beer,  
no other nothin' ..

sure he just wanted my and  
my city ass out of his hair ..

here's to you  
in  
the  
Country Store in Greenville ..

surely

never to read this little bit about  
you

and  
sure  
to keep the tobacco companies in  
full  
fuckin'  
swing for years  
to

come ..

## about the 11th

the 11th is gone  
and  
past ..

woke up after a solid  
night's sleep in the tent  
and outdoors  
looking at a bright yellow,  
blue,  
serene  
ceiling of wonder,  
past the times,  
dates and  
events the radio was speaking of  
as  
the  
bells rang,  
the dog scratched  
and  
we looked at the color 'orange'  
and was once again reminded that  
colors in this new land of thought,  
or modified as such,  
doesn't mean a fruit any more ..

or  
the color of the setting sun ..

it's a warning,  
one more reason to make  
people  
a  
neurotic  
pile of pill poppin'  
folk ..



## **all eyes in the sky**

the only thing that  
got me by the nuts  
pre-Sept. 11 in DC versus  
post Sept. 11 was  
the fact that  
the airplanes  
flew so damn low  
to the Lincoln Memorial ..

one minute you see  
the  
reflection out  
there in some  
silence,  
just the murmur of tourists,  
then the loud blast of fuselage  
and  
a  
plane blurring closer  
and  
closer to the ground  
as

the  
people just stopped and looked up

wondering

when  
it's  
ever gonna happen

again

where the suspension of disbelief  
is  
gone

and  
it  
could  
happen here

it  
could happen  
now

and  
Lincoln  
wouldn't have  
but not even a second

to duck

or  
wrap a piece of cloth  
around  
his  
eyes

as  
the  
planes

get lower  
and  
lower to the  
blasted

fuckin'

ground ..

## ALL THAT'S LEFT

somethin' happened to the  
left side of the family recently ..

my left eye got a sty  
one morning ..

puffed out and ready to pop ..

my brother's stuffed nose was clear on the right  
and  
crammed up on the left ..

my dad lost his hearing in his left ear  
completely ..

all on the left for all the males in the family ..

my sister and mother  
better watch out  
for  
what  
is  
right

as  
the  
ailments look at the right before crossing ..

## **another monument under construction**

if there was ever a US  
city where construction is  
constant and  
near never changin'  
it has to be DC ..

seems as though they have built all the monuments  
and  
tall buildings to plenty  
well stand the test of time,  
it is DC ..

crane within'  
the  
photo shoot  
and  
something being dug  
or closed to renovation ..

I find it very odd in a town  
such  
as  
this when  
I come home to a  
town where the Downtown sector  
sits silent  
like  
a  
dead  
and  
not wanting to resurrect ghost ..

when is the hint  
going to come ..

though,  
where it all began  
it continues  
to begin

again ..

I think

that's why I like the town so

much

and

I believe

that I will

find my way back ..

## **at the workplace yesterday ..**

not many kids,  
haven't taught class all week,  
meager crowd,  
found out I'm takin' a kid to DC,  
got a contract signed,  
placed an ad in the paper,  
the rest ..

so,  
my sidekick leaves early last night  
to do some security for a kid rapper  
at the theater park ..

needs the extra scratch because he says that the child support  
payments are killin' him  
as  
I agree to hold the reigns with the kids  
for a couple of hours ..

so,  
we start burning CD's and bullshit over some hard  
candy  
when I hear the  
commotion goin' down at the back door ..

there's some half white/black dude at the door  
yelling at some white guy  
while a three of our kids are in the middle of it ..

it's startin' to get heated,  
the white guy is telling me to call the cops ..

'NO,'  
I tell them.  
'LEAVE AND CALL YOURSELF AND GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE. WE HAVE KIDS HERE  
AND THEY DON'T NEED TO BE WRAPPED UP IN THIS FOLLY.'

They continue yellin',  
I pull the kids in,  
close the door  
and  
find out from one of the kids that the half/half cat  
got knifed last week ..

there's a healin' gash on his leg,  
sweat pant rolled up so it's show ..

they're arguin' over a girl  
as  
these kids wait for their hormones to collect  
to give any sort of shit about a gal to fight another kid ..

so,  
as the half/half  
pedals his bike up Armstrong  
the white guy is a set of silent lips yelling about  
this girl  
and  
how the guy is a motherfucker  
and  
he's gonna pay ..

that's the universal question on all people's minds  
around  
here ..

who's gonna pay,  
when are they gonna pay,  
are they gonna pay  
and

the time is gonna come  
when we all have  
to pay ..

so,  
hold on tight to that wallet cover,  
you're  
even  
gonna

have  
to  
pay ..

## back home where tired is awake

beyond the bar  
of regular tired  
as the gal meets me at the airport gate  
and  
we melt into the KC road,  
no gas,  
talkin' about the 9-11 exhibit in DC  
and how  
she was doin' with her boy  
that again  
busted his mouth into an orifice of red ..

she needs to put a metal gate around his mouth,  
there's something in Karma and his actions  
that brings havoc  
onto his mouth every time ..

feels almost eternal to be back in my place ..

a cold Coors and a brisket sandwich with plenty  
of sauce  
as  
I slip into delirious tired  
and  
see things floating about in my peripherals ..

wouldn't have it any  
other  
way ..

one minute I'm in front of the Washington monument,  
next I drive by the Liberty Memorial in KC  
and

it  
vexes me pleasantly how  
we can travel so  
damn  
fast

and  
feel  
so

damn  
free

when you come from the land  
of  
epicenter



and  
go  
back to  
what you have

and  
wonder about

what you didn't when you  
actually did have  
it  
all

and  
a  
bit more when  
you're out on the road  
road  
road  
road road ..

## bad toilet brush

always seem  
to be one  
thing wrong  
in a place after you move in ..

for me,  
it's a leakin' toilet  
with a  
bad and rusted chain ..

the water runs,  
my shit sits  
and  
the piss smolders into a  
gangly odor  
that won't  
leave for a bit ..

told the landlady that it's the only thing  
that  
need to be looked at ..

she nodded  
and  
said that he husband didn't like the high water bills ..

yet,  
nothin' has happened ..

I've had to strap a makeshift  
repair job on that crapper  
many  
and  
many a time  
when

all I wanted to do was  
walk away ..

so,  
my fateful,  
often used friend  
stands broken ..

with a shifty chain,  
shit in its eye  
and  
piss in its ears ..

so,

if you want to come up  
or know anyone that wouldn't mind,  
there's  
a  
roll of thick,  
fluffed  
toilet paper in  
for  
'em ..

## before sunset

black man with  
a green plastic cart  
filled with trash ..

walking directly through the intersection  
with a woman in a Chiefs jacket ..

no talking,  
they evaporated going towards main  
as  
the kid with his skateboard in tow  
comes up the street  
with eyes of vigor,  
waiting for the newest  
hunk of land to land his wheels and pedal  
to  
the  
destination  
destination ..

then,  
the local crack couple comes out of the trees ..

the red head woman  
and the black man with  
the head of floppy hair

come ambling up the street  
chewing on straws  
and  
blank teeth

waiting for the next score ..

regulars on the block  
always talking it up for the next  
high

as  
the  
man with the pipe coming from his haunches

ambles up the block  
in his black coat,  
lookin' about

just smoothes on forward  
as

though he didn't see anything

and wouldn't say anything about all of it if asked ..

gone now,  
as the cars turn in,  
turn out

and  
the  
morning melts into 11AM

and the new  
afternoon  
here

in the neighborhood dirty by the business  
and

cleaned

by the pipe fitters union ..

## BEN'S CHILI BOWL

one of the most solid stories  
I have  
heard in some time  
came from a mid-50's teacher  
from DC who

gave me a little history on the town  
the  
country calls DC ..

the only town on the map  
that can't cast a decent vote in  
any  
damn  
election we have ..

she was telling me about the Martin Luther King, Jr.  
riots that went down in '68 when he as assassinated  
around a burb  
outside of Howard University ..

actually it was lead in to a place that  
I needed to eat ..

it was a place called Ben's Chili Bowl ..

thing  
survived the bomb fire that swept through city after city block ..

the aggressors  
saved the joint  
because the owner was such a solid cat ..

this  
is the shit  
that  
gets you by the groin  
and  
I never made it by for a good bowl of chili ..

yet,  
yesterday I had a enough chili  
to make

up  
for it

as  
Ben likely bit into

a

big,  
sloppy,  
fallin' over the side

corned beef sandwich ..

## BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE HOOD

brothers walkin away  
from the  
break time food cart  
with a white styrofoam box of hot,  
tasty food  
as  
the sisters holler for their  
kids to stay out of the street ..

the brothers keepin' their pole in the girl,  
squirtin' towards the soccer goal  
as  
the doctor  
pulls all the sisters babies from the same hole ..

the other brothers with the hoods of their cars  
propped on the side of the road,  
doin' some work after seein' a tough guy film last  
night about daredevil car tricks,  
while the sisters bake some sweets and close the door of the oven  
so as to not inoculate the precious cold air goin' through the summer room ..

other brothers walkin' about with the brown bagged 40's  
up and down the block  
as the sisters  
stomp out their cigarettes and wonder  
when  
a  
good one is going to be pulled from that net off Maine during the lobster hunt ..

brothers whistlin' without abandon at a new pair of legs and skin  
goin' into the club  
as  
the  
sisters

keep on  
walkin' without  
nary an eye  
or  
acquiescing' ..

walk on sister,  
just  
walk on ..



## **call to wake**

in the lockdown tonight,  
police on the run,  
slight lag  
and a peak at Des Moines  
before the plane made it over the  
Potomac ..

in a lockdown without booze,  
my gal,  
a smoke in the room ..

they're cleaning me up  
and taking care of the bill ..

all in a morning wake up call,  
all in a morning wake up call ..

cat in the  
lap

and rubbing these  
words

away,  
we

have  
some more to say ..

**cats  
in their thirst  
for  
heat**

as  
the  
radio  
gets  
red  
red  
hot ..

they  
sit on the vent  
in  
their little hell utopia  
and  
look around with a slight  
meow  
growl ..

if they could find a way into the microwave,  
they  
would do it ..

they always land on their feet,  
they love bein' smashed,  
and  
the  
fucking

heat ..

the denizens  
of  
hot,  
those

feline  
fuckers  
and  
their

red hot curiosity ..

## day on the job

runnin' into new  
kids  
as  
the old ones stay home  
and  
Telly comes in wanting to  
again  
play me in a game of competitive solitaire ..

I don't give him a chance  
and  
snub him out in several moves ..

yet,  
the regulars still ask  
about comments the President made,  
proof read their work  
and  
ask whether or not we should start bombing Iraq ..

I say  
'YES'  
'NO'  
'HELL NO'  
'HELL YEA'  
and  
the  
rest

as  
the  
kids  
come  
back and the regulars stay at home ..

## **diggin' it**

Harrison diggin' love,  
the box diggin' ditches,  
kids diggin' the playground,  
girls diggin' the bad boys,  
the earth diggin' another plot,  
the old man diggin' the summer sunshine,  
the dog diggin' the kat's nip,  
the snake diggin' the oil,  
the dudes diggin' their good engine,  
the matriarch diggin' more power,  
the day diggin' the evenin',  
the march diggin' the drum solo,  
the

shovel  
diggin' what  
it  
can't see yet  
because

we  
want to know  
if  
it's all worth  
it  
or  
not ..

## **do you belong?**

the crazy man running up the street,  
the dogs panting over a bowl of sweat  
and  
the  
black woman screaming as loud as we can hear

to say  
that  
'I BELONG' ..

she belongs,  
we will look for her,  
she will be found when she's ready,  
she was lost because we were too prepared,  
and

the song  
goes down the cinder block  
and  
the

toilet man works another long  
over time hour  
day  
of

unclogging

where we  
belong

belong  
belong  
belong ..

## early and flat cold

been  
something about  
these early cold mornings  
this fall ..

gets me rollin' and  
out the door  
like nothing  
a  
warm morning used to ..

sure,  
married to the cold  
and  
divorced already from the hot months  
when I was lookin' for the cold ..

so,  
I now ink and pic  
everything around me on a  
cold  
fall  
morning  
here  
in

the americas as the tree leaves  
fight for the last of oxygen,  
the crows arrive,  
halloween may bring a kid by the place for the first  
time  
in  
years

as  
this  
old white  
brick house on the corner

stands

as  
my gun  
as

all the cooled off ammunition  
lies

around  
like something  
ready

to get  
all  
hot  
burned up and

ready for discharge ..



**early October 2002**

there's a shooting spree  
going on around here ..

no goin' to DC tonight ..

full lockdown in a 4H center ..

no smokin',  
no booze,  
nothin' ..

5 people dead  
and a show on the man who knew about bin Laden and 9/11  
and  
now  
Tom and Jerry  
are on the tube  
to salvage  
the  
sluggish  
DC burbs tonight ..

**eatin' everything in sight**

big girl,  
skinny dude,  
where you goin' with that  
pizza box in your hand?

how are you gonna  
split up those  
tasty slices ..

8 for her,  
1 for him ..

he's strainin' with the box,  
gettin up the hill  
while  
she pulls in harder and  
tighter on the cigarette  
end

and  
he's not gonna get none of it ..

big girl,  
skinny dude,  
how  
are  
you goin' to take care of that  
food  
in  
your  
hands

once  
you  
sit

down  
in  
the  
arms of luxury

## good hood

I hear  
&  
know it's a bad neighborhood  
as the boys in their gay belts go to 'BUDDIES'  
for a rainbow drink  
and car loads of  
girls in Honda's look for the next  
high or to  
get fucked ..

I don't notice it's a  
bad neighborhood  
so much  
because it is all caught after the fact ..

when the cops  
arrive,  
I try to piece it together  
&  
stick to my  
theory on how  
the paint there in this tarnished  
rocking chair  
square in the middle of the country,  
tilted  
more towards the cold side of the sun with  
dreams of how the other side is going to take care  
&  
deal  
with the  
hots and  
heats ..

## how in the rain

she loads up the car,  
listens to the airplane cuttin'  
through the rain clouds low,  
the sound of some crickets,  
drops of the day fallin'  
and an AC vent hummin'  
as she veers around to the  
drivers side,  
looks up,  
down,  
starts the engine  
&  
really,  
really wonders  
how the rain came down all this day ..

## how to furnish

I'm good with  
the hand  
downs ..

I keep my skin covered  
and  
apartment full with  
things that are given  
to me  
or found around town ..

the other day,  
I went to a house next to my gal's  
that was ready to be picked over ..

several heroin addicts  
that didn't get the point with methadone treatment  
and  
they had to  
pack up one small truck payload  
and  
fly to Florida ..

the Sheriff's orders ..

so,  
I got a navy coat,  
nice black bedside table,  
box of oil colors,  
forks,  
spoons (only two),  
knives,  
a tour book on Tokyo  
and  
a  
small oriental silk bag with a broken plate ..

other times,  
I have the gal  
or  
others give me clothes they find  
around  
or  
given to them somehow ..

can't remember the last time  
I went out to buy  
clothes  
or  
furniture ..

just seems to  
work out ..

no pride here with  
interior design ..

everyone has somethin'  
and  
I'm willin' to play with that somethin'  
with  
all

of my little somethin'

and still  
relatively broke in  
the pocketbook

as  
the  
debtors  
go

traipsin' through  
stores  
I've

never seen before ..

spend .. spend .. spend ..

little children ..

## **I took the kid prodigy**

from his KC mind  
to DC for a national conference with  
a  
team of new kid faces ..

kid almost cried as we veered off in the  
cab  
towards downtown DC,  
past Watergate  
and  
around the rest of the lies this city hatched ..

but the truth was in the back  
of this cab ..

a 17-year old out of town,  
way the fuck out of town for the first time  
was feeling the pang  
of  
new ties  
and  
an  
innocence we swim through  
in their eyes and  
how  
they want to reach fame and all the rest in  
one way or another ..

so,  
Damien,  
we did it ..

your yearning and  
my bad breath is  
all

indications  
that  
another American city has been conquered  
and

the girls you met  
will have a hard time falling

asleep

because

you  
didn't sleep while you were away ..

the yearning may fade,  
kid,  
but

if it doesn't you  
know

you did something right  
in  
this life ..

leave things a  
little more interesting,  
make 'em wonder

and  
punch the clock  
right  
in  
the  
center

to make sure that both  
arms

feel

the  
fucking noise ..



## **in, out and about**

went in one ear,  
went in the other,  
went in one eye,  
went into the other,  
went into my one mouth

and  
out one nostril,  
then another nostril ..

sure,  
it was the sound of your rain,  
then it  
was the sound of your spring,  
then it  
was  
the  
sound I couldn't quite remember  
or  
put my finger on at the time ..

though,  
it went in twice,  
over the organs  
of  
our

sense ..

can you make sense of this,  
dear?

## **just a drink**

only had  
several times to get together  
with my  
neighbor in the house  
I live in ..

over several beers  
and  
a  
cup of coffee to  
begin with ..

it always ends up with a bleary eyed  
stumble over  
the  
hallway to our  
respective homes ..

just  
sluggin' like there's nothin' goin'  
on  
in

the world ..

so,  
what  
the  
hell is goin' on ..  
neighbor ..

## KC leave DC

one more  
moment about DC  
before  
KC  
begins

and  
I climb into the car  
to  
get to work ..

one more minute  
with the low flyin' planes  
over the Lincoln Memorial  
before  
the KC chase goes down ..

One more minute on the Capitol's steps  
as  
the  
security guards wait with loaded guns and  
slippery steps  
before  
KC goes into full bloom ..

One more time  
with Airport security  
and  
takin' off your clothes to pass security codes  
before  
KC comes down that  
plastic race track ..

One more slug of AM DC jazz,  
the man from the Bronx  
and the women lookin' the way women do before  
KC  
comes screamin' through the snooze bar ..

One more dot on the DC portrait  
with all  
it's austere that sucks me in reluctantly  
each time  
before

I  
go off to look at KC  
with  
a

discerning eye

and

a

sock full of

hopeful restoration ..

## LA looks at a KC kid

at the intersection,  
Jose looks over  
as  
the cherries on the top of the squad car  
flash all bright and big ..

he looks over on the DC street  
and says,  
'WATCH, WHEN HE'S THROUGH THE INTERSECTION, THEY WILL GO OFF'

fuckin' low and flat behold,  
the cherries died  
as  
the cop pulled a fast one on the surrounding  
traffic  
but  
not  
Jose ..

the man from LA that's heard and remembers more  
than one

name  
as  
he pushes up his glasses on a sweaty face

ready for a cold  
room

and  
a  
way out of  
this crazy  
mess

where the cops are pulling  
faster ones than the crook ..

## **laborin' the day**

the guy  
with  
'55' on the back  
of his shirt  
comes down the labor day sidewalk  
towards the old man in a brown shirt,  
sack of groceries in his hand ..

he stops,  
looks  
at him

and  
starts picking at stuff in  
the grass,  
moves slowly  
as  
though he's casing a car for later ..

then  
moves on slowly towards Main,  
and another adventure

that  
these eyes are waiting to  
endeavor ..

he's off work,  
celebratin'  
the  
Labor Day with nothing  
but  
a  
work  
in  
front of him ..

## latest release

heard a couple  
of  
things

about the last  
book chap I threw out on the streets ..

one  
gal

wanted to fuck  
afterward  
readin' in ..

another  
guy  
sent me a note  
that  
it made his morning ..

shit,  
makes it a bit easier

when  
you  
aren't makin' much bread off  
of  
it  
to make the tuna happy in mayonnaise ..

so,  
there it goes  
and  
here it cums  
up the pipe of a loaded  
invisible pistol,  
the  
reasons  
for

the writin'  
always

had a way  
of  
silencin'  
the  
worrier's  
out

there  
on  
this

night  
a  
comin'  
down now ..



## long, long awaited rain

the first rained over  
day  
all fall  
&  
the last part of summer  
and the  
town has gone nuts ..

several kids at work today  
tested my girth  
and  
I tossed 'em from the center ..

one kid ..

after an explanation that  
I wouldn't keep such a close eye  
on the group after some hijinx,  
I got the 'YES MAM'  
from a clown in the back of the room ..

-OUT-

'AAHHH - AAHHH-

Out,  
I told him ..

he left ..

then,  
while the kids were watchin' a film on Castro,  
I pulled up a seat to sit ..

Went to plant down and  
fuckin' smash ..

on the ground,  
15 or so black kids laughin'  
and  
the young culprit runnin' away from me ..

rain pourin'  
harder,  
told him hew was out for life ..

after busy signals at home,  
phone was disconnected,  
I told him to leave for good ..

a little harsh in hindsight  
as the squirt walked home  
in the pourin' rain ..

then,  
tonight,  
the gal and the kid - a five year old,  
came over to hang  
before I was to fly off to DC for the next 4 days ..

he spits at his mom,  
throws shit around ..

WWIII has erupted ..

-GONE-

He's screamin'  
after givin'  
the fish of mine,  
Flash,  
new water and food on a rain  
rainy day ..

there in a chagrin and  
gone ..

some time after they have left,  
the fire truck  
and ambulance  
come to haul someone away ..

a girl,  
woman,  
slung over a medic's shoulder  
is put into the back of the  
medicine wagon  
and  
off they go ..

the rain has slacked,  
cool breezes,  
several smokes,  
Rufus from the top window  
as  
I sit on the porch with a cold Coors  
and  
DC in the morrow noon ..

leavin' the wet  
soaked  
loons behind  
for the sun to dry them  
off  
&  
the wind ready to rinse a new

idea  
over their frantic,  
draught stricken heads ..

## long tailed pull chord

On the  
Saturday night couch,  
tired like  
the  
gal  
and  
the rest that watched the kids  
hit the piñata,  
got squirted down  
and  
ran around in kid frolic ..

Just lookin' outside  
over across the way at  
the  
house  
across  
and

I saw a kid reaching up for  
the pull chord on the  
light in  
to top room of a yellow house ..

Jumping with all their might  
after finding what was once lost in the house,  
finding the pull chord ..

flicking the light  
and  
getting  
out quick ..

Fast as light  
can go on &  
off ..

Einstein's theory  
working  
on  
a  
very small scale,  
but well executed  
in  
the  
top of the Mexican  
house  
across

the  
street

from  
the  
day of white kids

smashing the  
ear,  
arms,  
legs,  
body

and  
rest  
of  
a  
piñata  
full of willful surprise  
and

out

like a light once the day had  
a  
chance  
to  
be heard

full  
and  
flat well ..

## LOVELY MEXICANS

there's some Mexican  
cats that live across the  
street from my  
lover friend ..

we talk our talk,  
drink our drink and  
smoke our smoke  
one porch away from each other ..

these guys always have talk,  
beer  
and  
frolic goin' on ..

never seen a happier set of guys  
in  
my life ..

never a woman around  
and  
they would be vultures if there were ..

newly christened immigrants  
and  
their speech is seldom english,  
only  
if someone passes by  
or  
they talk to the repair man comin' to the door ..

so,  
the other day  
we hear a pack of loud poppin' sounds  
and laughter ..

one of the Mexicans let off a line of firecrackers in someone's  
hand or pocket  
and  
did they laugh ..

they laughed for  
about 5 solid minutes and shoved each other around  
in pal slaps on the shoulder and upper arms ..

shit man,  
let 'em in ..

let 'em talk their talk ..

I love  
those Mexicans ..

all those Mexicans  
with their fireworks  
and

loud tuba music across the  
way from  
the  
lady's place ..

**MAN!**

the kid yellin' at me  
after he  
was tucked  
in  
with some stories  
and  
a  
mother's hand ..

yellin',  
'MAN'  
until I replied with my  
own  
'MAN' ..

then,  
he started goin'  
on with some other catch phrases  
that  
we have  
thrown around in idle  
banter  
over  
the  
days and weeks that has transpired ..

a good,  
solid  
spry kid  
with the whole world in his cuticles  
and  
the  
cop cars swervin' not to hit  
into the bubble of his  
imaginary world ..

sure,  
boundless like a wad of rubber bands  
bouncin',  
this kid never wants to sleep ..

always ready to yell  
the  
next thought into his head  
and

I'll  
be  
there to yell it back  
louder,



to make sure that he  
gets

louder

as  
the  
kid  
keeps on growin' a day more  
each  
day  
like  
me,  
you,  
him,  
her,  
it

and  
them ..

## meat man dreams

the man with a stylish  
tan brimmed hat  
cuts meat,  
cleans meat,  
heaves meat,  
loves meat  
at  
the  
local grocery Shoppe ..

doesn't smile all that much,  
even after  
he's handed you  
a  
fresh package of poultry or  
top sirloin ..

he's a surely old  
salt of the earth  
sort ..

simple pleasure  
kind of guy  
I remember from my  
5 years or so in  
the grocery industry ..

but,  
I always seem to run into him late  
at night  
when he gets off  
and  
shuffles the floor lookin'  
for his  
canned goods ..

he always has a pack of meat  
with no sticker  
and  
gets a little grin on  
his face as he heads for the cheese,  
sweets,  
liquor section ..

his name is likely Buck or Mack,  
though he probably prefers  
the mean man with the  
stylish tan  
brimmed hat ..

mosey on down there pal,

you've earned the  
evenin'  
free after slicin',  
cleanin',  
cuttin' and tendin'  
the cow,  
pig and chicken harvest ..

goin' for a sweet pull  
off the bottle  
or a good gal,  
if he's luck  
when the  
grocery hour  
comes  
to  
a

close ..

**message in the rust**

*you get  
messages,  
meanings and alerts  
all  
day long*

*if you are payin' attention,  
or if you're not ..*

*I see one on the side of the highway  
today  
that  
says,  
'OZONE ALERT! FUEL YOUR CAR AFTER 7 PM AND NO MOWIN' YOUR LAWN!' ..*

*shit,  
my tank is half full and  
I don't have a lawn to mow ..*

*I paid attention  
and  
none of it has anything to do with me ..*

*I suppose  
you usually remember what strikes you,  
applies to you  
or  
has you involved in some way ..*

*I always enjoy  
rememberin' what doesn't have anything to do with  
me  
so  
I can let someone know that actually will  
be affected by it ..*

*public informant #3,745,091  
folks ..*

## **new 9-11 call**

9-11 is around the bin  
now  
as  
we decide where to go  
on  
vacation  
and  
listen to the hum of  
new flags  
bein' placed in  
the  
flag stand ..

## not Mexican again tonight ..

two older  
folk,  
seen time to time  
comin' up and down the block  
before here ..

the gal is a short,  
overweight gal  
with  
a  
tall skinny husband man  
that  
has  
all he lines,  
warts,  
wrinkles  
and  
hobbles of a life  
that hasn't gone his way ..

they don't say much  
and  
I just spotted them crossing the intersection  
in  
the  
middle of the road ..

him,  
lookin' down at her,  
her lookin' forward to the next block  
as  
he puts his hand on her back  
as

she lazily tries to flick it loose ..

didn't give it such a good,  
solid  
try ..

his hand stayed a couple of seconds longer  
until he  
pulled it off himself ..

they must  
have  
had an argument about  
why he wouldn't stand for the  
HEADLINE from McDonald's that they're  
fries are going to be cooked in a newer

oil  
and  
thus they would be healthier ..

wouldn't get her a basket  
cause he's tire of hearin' her  
complain about all the weight ..

so,  
the old man  
waits for  
her  
to  
put his hand around her  
waist

as  
the  
mexican woman  
goin'  
to  
her shift in the McDonald's outfit  
looks  
up

at  
the  
sky  
and  
wonders when the rain  
is  
gonna fall

down

and  
wash  
the  
grime  
away ..

## **On a DC stroll,**

the sniper is still loose,  
and  
I'm out with a cat from the Bronx  
and another from LA ..

they're givin' me some shit about  
not  
wantin' to have some tequila shots ..

so we're out lookin' for a good  
waterin' hole after some  
days with the kids  
and tamin' it down from  
the  
days  
we're all used to back home ..

so,  
we go by a community center in the midst of a  
DC neighborhood  
and  
I notice  
some kids runnin' around,  
ridin' bikes  
and such as  
the parents sit on the curb  
and look after the small ones ..

I see them  
and the silhouettes  
of some rats  
come out of the  
stark  
evenin' light ..

they're feedin' on their feed  
as  
the kids peddle and run  
like  
a  
bunch  
of soldiers  
unaware  
of the impending troops coming in to steal their last cusp of bread ..

I look,  
wipe the sweat off my brow  
and  
remember that I should remember this ..

it's all the same wherever you go ..

the kids,  
rats,



and

the adults lookin' on into the light of their conversation,  
waitin' to escape from their parental bondage

while the rats  
run  
and  
roam  
like free  
standard

fare  
in  
a  
town dependent on public transit ..

## **on the porch**

no one around,  
red eyes  
and I don't feel like poutin' ..

the faint hint of Mexican music tryin' to conquer the  
murmur of the crickets ..

the sound of cars that could be her,  
the sound of tell tale  
solemnities as  
the  
laughter goes  
white  
and the wash basin  
waist for some more dirt ..

**one for the homies in the crowd**

comin' back  
with a belly full of lunch,  
several friends from the work  
spot  
with  
me

and  
a  
man stops me to ask for some change ..

I didn't stop,  
just reached for a paper in the machine  
and  
said,  
'THERE'S CHANGE ALL AROUND US.'

'What?'  
he came back.

I got the paper out of the machine,  
looked up at him,  
stopped and said,  
'THERE'S CHANGE ALL AROUND US.'

'Oh,'  
he began in an angered tone.  
'You're trying to be funny, huh?'

'LOOK MAN, I'M POOR TOO. AND YOU APPROACHED ME FOR MONEY. PLUS, THERE  
IS CHANGE ALL AROUND US.'  
I said matter a fact.

'TRYIN' TO BE FUNNY WHEN I'M TRYING TO MAKE IT'  
he said with some difficulty.

I walked on as  
the two I was with were laughin' about it the whole way back,  
though I wasn't lookin' for laughs ..

it's the truth ..

I'm broke and a bit tired of having between 2 to 7 people knocking me up  
for change  
every time I decide to leave my house ..

I can use the change too ..

namely them not asking me for  
money much more would be enough change for me ..

thank you,  
folks ..

## one straight villain

old man  
in the blue leisure shirt  
comes  
strollin' up to the  
intersection corner,  
says a  
'hello' to the black man runnin' up and  
down the block  
as  
a  
swelter of people arrive and leave ..

the couple staring at my window,  
a man on a bike,  
a woman walkin' down the middle of my street,  
my neighbor in his tiny yellow car,  
the boys with backwards hats  
and  
the  
rest of the cavalry just strollin'  
on  
this night where  
the  
air needs to be turned off to  
recognize September  
for  
bein'  
September  
and  
the monarch for  
bein'  
the  
monarch ..

though,  
as  
the  
sun settles into its crochet kit,  
the crooks start gatherin'  
around with their plans  
as  
the  
city lies  
awake  
and  
ready

for

the  
NEW STRIKE,  
SWELTER  
or  
VILLIANY!

## PIMP ATTITUDE

few things get  
you closer than what you could be capable  
of

than when a mouthy  
inner city kid  
give you  
the  
wry eye and a mouth of shit ..

had a kid flip that jive  
on me tonight  
and  
I slammed him verbally against  
the

mat

and  
he kept on talkin' ..

as  
the  
arm of time moves for him,  
as well as me,  
I  
hope he  
gets it sometime soon,  
because

the  
dark  
is  
a  
lonely  
dark  
place to be for too long ..

## Plantin' a little September tonight

it  
is  
dark  
at  
8PM ..

rain  
is  
forecasted ..

G. Harrison  
remastering  
his  
masters

in  
the  
middle of a Midwestern  
segue ..

the feet  
full of  
gesso,  
the hair is floppin' all  
over  
the  
scalp,  
the dogs are joining the fleas  
in  
a search to find something good to drink ..

old friends  
talkin' to old friends,  
new  
archers  
shooting at old targets ..

a  
flip flop  
eve  
as  
the  
rain

gets closer,  
it gets darker,  
the humidity feels like an old flame wanting something  
more than closure  
as



the

clouds stay hidden behind  
the bigger clouds

and  
Harrison,  
along with many of the biggest,  
even Robert Plant at the Uptown up the street tonight,  
are  
covering  
the  
Minnesota man  
Dylan  
and

his  
underground sessions  
gettin'  
scooped  
out

of  
an old shovel used  
to bury

the  
past,  
past,  
sweet past,  
lover ..

## quiet tonight

it's quiet tonight,  
sound of boots comin' down the street,  
a spare car here  
and there ..

the mexicans  
talkin',  
they say  
"IT'S NOT A GOOD NIEGHBORHOOD"  
as the old man  
goes strollin' by,  
no doubt,  
ecstatic  
about how cool and  
quiet tonight  
just happens to be ..

## rumor of the day

crook on the 3rd floor of the Montclaire across  
the street  
has  
his  
shades drawn  
as  
Rajesh pumps gas  
in Chicago,  
my lover sips tea  
and  
my dad tries to figure out the video game console ..

the young couple comes by with their his and her  
dog  
as  
the boommp  
boooooommmppp  
boooooommmmmppp  
of tonight  
goes  
umph  
umpff  
umphhfff  
over my slightly  
dirtied,  
comfortable  
cotton pajama pants  
and the rumor of  
a  
new day coming  
tomorrow ..

**she's at home alone**

kenny and the group  
playin  
'SITTIN' ON THE THING WITH MING'  
and I feel like  
I'm  
back in the jazz throne  
ready to toss the word around  
like a salad I'll never eat  
yet keep in the refrigerator  
just in case things tend to get  
somewhat meek ..

then the  
gal starts playing  
and  
the  
drunk in the moonlight looks more like  
a  
mighty monarch that never had a chance  
to  
speak ..

sure,  
tongue tied  
and  
the  
girl is fighting to not drive home  
as  
she takes into her hand another beer  
and  
one

more reason  
to  
make sure that the world  
knows

there's more to prove  
than

a  
great  
fuckin' pair of legs ..

## SID

It was her 30th birthday

and the people were about  
to show up in force ..

though,  
there was one cat I remember before the people showed up ..

it was a black man with short dreadlocks and  
a  
solid disposition ..

he had one of those old style Jeep Cherokee's with the wood paneling  
and  
we talked briefly about it ..

then,  
shifted into other small talk before I took  
my  
lover away to get ready for the surprise  
that was  
to be her 30th birthday  
and  
a  
houseful of people ..

we left,  
came back to a full house ..

it was a solid scene ..

though,  
I remember this man with the locks coming up to me specifically before  
he  
left the scene ..

he wanted to say 'bye'  
and  
talk a bit ..

we had some good banter ..

we talked of the Jeep and some other things  
that  
I have a problem remembering now ..

he said that we should hang out some time,  
that he would be around ..

he said his 'good bye'  
and

drifted off with the lingering conversations  
and  
people catching up and  
getting to the point where they wouldn't have to catch up for  
a  
time ..

he left,  
I scarcely remember his name  
until the gal called me yesterday ..

a good month or so since  
here  
surprise party

and  
she tells me that this man with the locks  
and  
cool demeanor  
committed suicide via a rope and noose the previous Saturday ..

her good friend  
told me that it was a complete surprise ..

in fact,  
the night it happened he told an ex-girlfriend he went out on a date with that  
he was going to do it ..

she didn't believe him  
and she should have ..

he's gone now  
and  
it

all seems too soon  
and  
it makes me wonder if there was something more we  
should have talked 'bout that day ..

though,  
this one is for you,  
pal ..

wherever you're at now ..

it was too damn  
short,  
as  
it all is ..

though,  
we

would like to see you back ..

back in a surprise  
as

most people forget

the surprises  
until

it's just a bit too late ..

timing,  
like good comedy or a solid story,  
again

it comes  
down  
to

timing ..

timing

and  
this time  
it's for you,  
friend ..

## SLIPPIN' ON THE PORCH

clean slice of the moon ..

like a silver mirror banana  
that the hands behind the skies grew easily  
&  
quickly as we root the yellow out of the  
sun  
and into the peels of what we  
throw on  
the  
ground to make the  
stranger or clown  
trip on ..



## something of the truth news

at home  
tonight ..

the gal wanted to call it an early one ..

some moccasins on,  
candles licking oxygen like a man on a good cunt,  
the  
cat looks on waiting for its moment to slip onto  
my lap  
as  
the  
fish swims in the light of the lava lamp  
and  
the  
8 straight days of gray  
keep on going ..

enough rain to kill my telephone  
and  
any other access to the outside world  
that  
I may dream of havin'  
and  
things  
couldn't look any brighter  
through another fog lit evening  
with  
the  
cold coming down in a classic fall's fall  
and

the  
rise of  
spring coming up from  
areas

that  
only the  
people on the outside can speculate ..

**sometime**  
**past late September**

and  
the tiger is growlin' in the zoo cage  
as  
the  
CD companies try to find another  
way to make a buck ..

the undergrounders  
settle in for  
another cup of coffee  
in the courtyard  
as  
the man in a sheared off pair of jean shorts,  
yellow sweater,  
fights with the PA equipment to get the sound and images  
together  
for  
a  
locally produced film festival ..

this,  
as the man with a hand of cold suds  
goes amblin' through the middle of the intersection  
slow and steady,  
waitin' for the next  
of  
events to happen ..

he decides to turn  
left  
and  
wonders what is really left?

sure,  
the bikers  
and  
cars  
and  
the lot of us  
rollin' about like  
fools for the next  
moment

that  
is  
goin' to make us somehow more whole  
to tackle the next moment ..

or as the man in  
the  
middle of the road drunk  
presumes,  
he has all of it figured out for

the  
following moment ..

he figured it out many,  
many years ago ..

on his way to  
a  
personal epiphany  
that

we may  
have the fortunate circumstance  
to  
dream about ..

**stole my satchel  
but not my luck**

no more paper  
in  
the place ..

the authors,  
or those proposin' to be such,  
ransacked my  
goods  
while  
I was away trying to support myself  
when I can't write,  
right?

what kind of shit is  
that ..

the psuedo writers  
have  
taken all I have ..

so,  
the next time  
you

want that one you couldn't remember  
written down,  
pluck out your  
arm

and  
squeeze your eyes as  
though

in the tattoo artists  
chair ..

I have  
a  
little  
ink  
to  
scrawl  
on

you  
because  
the

quasi-writer folk  
have

made out with all my  
fuckin' pulp ..

## street war and a muted TV

Came home the other night tired  
from  
the  
day of  
work  
and  
weekend of

birthday after  
birthday ..

turn on the TV  
to  
sleep to a  
documentary on  
the  
Civil War ..

sound effects,  
voice dubs,  
the black and whites of Brady and his  
eye of  
the  
war  
that  
started all the racial wars in this country ..

Groggy,  
restive,  
I look up and hear  
a  
voice yell  
out the back window,  
'STAY DOWN MOTHERFUCKER. DON'T MOVE.'

I figure it's something gone awry ..

a resident has  
a  
thug intruder  
pinned on the ground and is ready to call the cops ..

I flick the light off in the kitchen to get  
a  
cleaner view ..

there's a row of trees obstructing my view ..

I hear the strugglin' of a man on the ground  
and  
a  
voice keeping him at bay ..

a  
call for backup on a walkie talkie,  
then an unmarked car pulling up to take the detainee into  
detention  
and  
for the finger prints ..

more cops show up,  
they search the area for other leads  
and  
leaked drugs ..

sure,  
the real Civil War on the streets  
woke  
me up and  
I still don't know exactly what went down ..

quickly everything transpired and  
everyone is just as quickly gone ..

I'm pullin' on a fresh,  
cold cup of water

as  
confused as the  
next  
on

as to exactly  
why

and how

these wars go on and down ..

as  
the  
the age old war  
against  
substance  
and  
idea

continues  
to  
rage

on these streets  
around

me

coming  
out of a nap,  
coming  
out  
of  
my head to see it a bit closer than the next  
person  
in

line ..