

Modest
Gifts



Poems and Drawings
by
Norman Mailer

drawing book preface, 5/28/03

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MODEST GIFTS

Well, in fact, I do. It's ~~with~~ Caveat Emptor. Yes, by all means, let the buyer

The title is accurate, (you will purchase)
beware. The title is honest. ~~(The gifts are modest.~~ William Merrill, a poet to respect,

once wrote: "a poem too easy to read [is] without value. . . Difficult surfaces [are] ~~rather~~

[work]
an invitation to [fight] through to the poem's emotional core."

These pieces ~~poems~~ will, for the most part, be comprehensible on first approach. Some,

indeed, barely qualify as poems. They are snippets of prose, called ~~rather~~ that I call short hairs,

a ~~infinite~~ to by a hairs width
infinitesimal hairs, these variations of short remarks that shift your mood for better or
worse by not much more than a hairs width.

One can argue, although I will not, that a (of a poet's worth) can be the do is a
the impact of one's words does succeed in altering the reader's mood.

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In any event, I ~~can~~ make no ~~bona-fide~~ claim for most of these poems. They are

~~aggressively modest~~ ^{passing} work, written by a man who has no ^{great} technical knowledge of prosody and is all too ready to demonstrate it.

Much the same can be said of the drawings. Is one to call them caricatures,

cartoons, squibbles ^{or} doodles? They, too, are modest. If I now combine the drawings and

the short hairs, it is ~~to use the bloody word~~ ^{the same} for the most modest of reasons. I want to

give pleasure to the reader. My serious work, such as it is, does not ^{always} often accomplish

that. Nor does it always want to. I ~~may~~ ^{a demanding} belong to ~~that~~ ^{novelists} group of writers who demand

~~something~~ ^{audience. I want} much from their readers. I expect I believe that the reader owes more to the writer than

a bit of ^{a gratitude} ~~an ongoing search~~ for the enlivening of his or her leisure time. I may have been ^{had my mind} ~~branded~~

^{scored} ~~scored~~ at an early age by the great nineteenth century Russian novelists with their implicit

expectation that the reader is there to suffer ^{with} the writer. Why? For one huge

reason--the ongoing quest to deepen our comprehension of life and eternity, as ^{such a} ~~life and eternity cannot survive without that quest~~

I still believe ^{that} ~~that~~, but at the age of eighty, ^{however} tolerance insists on seeping into ^{(chronic} ~~painting)~~

dedication. Casual pleasures become more meaningful as lively pleasures sleep, and

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Amusement becomes its own small virtue. So I now like to think that a ^{small if occasionally} ~~limited~~ ^{sharp} ability in

^{to draw} drawing when coupled with an equally small ^{but evident} pretension to serious poetry can become a

little more than the sum of its parts. ^{It should} ~~One can give a quick answer. It is, at a common~~ ^{and successful in giving pleasure}

^{if only} ~~with a fit an even~~ level, almost as common as fast food, or ~~maybe a little better~~, decent chicken

sandwiches, good hot dogs and beans, surprisingly ^{tasty} ~~good~~ cole slaw.

If one wishes ^(at which to nibble at) ~~to nibble at~~ a mental repast while perusing this book, the menu has

been offered.

^{But not} ~~entirely~~ ^(not) No, that is ~~not all~~ if one is to be candid. I confess that there are, ^{may be} ~~I think~~, a few

poems and one or two first-rate cartoons in this assemblage. Which ones they are, I keep

to myself. ^{My} The real pleasure ^{for the compiler} will come if there is no general agreement

^{d. Hermit} ~~and ten~~ ^{are proposed} ~~and twenty~~ candidates for the prize are offered by different men and women. ^{twelve}

^{slip} ~~Yes, I~~ knew this attitude would appear ^(out of the closet) ~~modesty is too harsh a cincture~~ ^{for me} to sustain through the

length even of ^a ~~this~~ short preface.

#

(4)

One further note:

The poems were written in the early Sixties whereas the majority of drawings were done in recent years. Nonetheless, these sketches repeat, I think, something in the tone of the short hairs.

I would add, however, that my ongoing mood ^{was hardly} ~~meditative~~ ^{was not} (the same in those two or three years when the poems were originally done, and so I include an Appendix ^{well,} ~~which~~ It is the preface I wrote for a mass paperback edition of Deaths for the ladies ^{and it} ~~which~~ ^{almost} came out ten years after the first publication in 1962. It ^{should} ~~may~~ provide an interesting sub-text to ~~what you have already~~ ^{that} readers who enjoyed this particular ~~set~~ small volume.

Prague Writers' Festival Festival spisovatelů Praha



William S. Burroughs: "We don't report the news. We write it."

6 - 10 April 2003

27 May 2003

Dear Norman Mailer,

It is our pleasure to invite you as the guest of honour to the 14th Prague Writers' Festival, presented at the Theatre Minor, 21 - 25 March 2004.

The Festival is dedicated to Joseph Roth: "I don't know where I'm going."

A tradition in Prague, the Festival has become one of the most prominent literary events in Europe, though it remains quite intimate for its authors.

The Festival is broadcast live over the internet through the book pages of The Guardian: www.guardian.co.uk/books. Our Guardian Conversations provide quite a flare for "what gives light must endure burning".

Please view our Festival site, www.pwf.pragonet.cz, which presents this year's Festival, its history, interviews with authors as well as live performances for the past four years.

We will provide business-class air travel for you and your wife from New York via Czech Airlines, splendid accommodation at Hotel Joseph, the first design hotel in Prague, and an appropriate honorarium.

Date of arrival: Saturday, 20 March. We will meet you, with at least five long-stem roses at the airport. It's been our dream for ages.

My direct mobile: + 420 603 560 510.

Warm regards,

Michael March
president, PWF

cc: Judith McNally

Explanations

The art of
the
short hair
is that
it
don't
go on
for
too long.

There is
no rest
for the wicked
wrote
Mr. M.
discovering
the art
of
the
short hair.

put down
that
penicillin
dad

get me
a dose
of gonorrhea

doing the limbo bit
it's good enough
for me

Of course,
Mr.
President,
replied the matador
to the intercom,

we
are
indeed hot
on
the track
of the
wonder
disease

and
are
now feeding
the penicillin
its dose.
Expect to save
it
and all
group-related
compounds
if the
television
does not collapse.

A plague is
coming
named

Virus Y 3 X
still unsolved
promises to be
proof
against
antibiotics
psychoanalysis
research projects
vitamins
awards
crash programs
crash diets
symposiums
foundations
rest
rehabilitation
tranquilizers
aspirin
surgery
brainwashing
lobotomies
rises in status
box office boffo
perversions
and
even
a
good
piece
of

When that unhappy day
comes to America
let the Russians
take over.
The best defense is
infection.

(Penicillin, chief weapon against venereal disease, is losing some of its punch. In 1943, 100,000 units of the drug were considered sufficient to effect a cure for gonorrhea. Today, doses of one million units are commonplace, and many physicians inject more than two million. Yet in Japan, for example, 30 percent of gonorrhea cases have failed to respond even to massive doses.—Reader's Digest, MARCH 1961)

One
man's
meat
is an-
other's
milk
said the aficionado

Interplanetary

as
he
skimmed
the
cream
from his
third drop
and transported it holy

to a
tube which knew a
syringe.

Definition of a Lady

She grasps
the root
while kissing
the bud

How can you
say
you're
only
three-quarters
a man,
why you're
completely
a man
said the
lady
in a
three-quarter voice.

oh, David, said the static
we did a testimony
on him like testimonial
and still he died
from
gulch
of the jaw,
dig?

Yes, said David
but he bore
the pain
bravely

some men
are born
to bore

Exodus

Goodbye America,
Jesus said.
Come back, *boy!*
we cried
too late.

THE
INAUGURAL
BALL

antibiotics
psychoanalysis
research projects
vitamins
awards
crash programs
crash diets
symposiums
foundations
rest
rehabilitation
tranquilizers
aspirin
surgery
brainwashing
lobotomies
rises in status
box office boffo
perversions

tenderness
to
liberty
and
irony
to
fate

Naked

Where
the act fails
sleep binds
the bodies
of those
who
were
born
to love
each
other
in
truth.

Coffee

Panhandling
the Bowery
on Sunday aft
with gray sky
and no butts
we had an
argument
over the
 merits
of frozen food
versus canned.

Canned is awful,
I said, it comes
out half dead.

Yeah, said Red
 but
 frozen
 is stone.

Paddy Chayevsky Revisited

will you
 enjoy
 it
said
 the
 virgin.

listen
 said
 the Bronx,

see your
 lawyer,
 draw
 up a
 contract

which
 stipulates
 I got
 to
 enjoy
 it,

and
 I'll
 still
enjoy
 it,
 golden
 girl.

returned
with
three
stiff
fingers
to the
plexus
or the
neck
The
rule
is
keep
cool
This
is
New
York

Sex in the Mafia—
Weak Son Division

Darling
said the lady
being wooed
When I'm
with
you
I don't
have
the
feeling
you're
ever
sincere

Cheer up, pal,
said the
cigar,
it's im-
possible
to do something
good
without
being
like
halfass
sincere,
Excuse my smoke.

Mood
is a
congregation
of souls
in the cells.

Those
who govern
a body
of murdered hopes
and
cold will
are subject to
sudden defeats
of mood
so severe
as to pose
the question:

Is mood a temple
which gives us
sanctuary
against
the desire
of our cells
to return to
their beginnings
under a
new master
who promises
that he
will not
repeat
the hesitations,
compassions
and
aesthetic
com-
punctions of God
about
pleasure
profit
and
progress
but
instead
will rip up
the roots
and give us
the broad
macadam
of
civic virtue
tranquilized pain
eternity
without fire
and sucaryl
for the syrup
of the peach.

To the lower classes

Noblesse
Oblige
has one rule
and
one rule only

You must be
so nice
so bright
so quick and
so well turned
that
no one need
tell you
a second time.

Tell me what?
that the world
is well-lost
for love
and the upper
classes
are the
law above?

I tell you this:
if the
upper classes
are kin to God
in style—
(which is one hypothesis
we do not ignore:
how else account
for elegance?)

if the
upper classes
are kin to God
in style
then God has no love
but guilt, nor a style
apart from fashion,
no courage but to
do in duty
what
one does not desire
and no worth
but for His love
at beauty

For there
is noble's work
their plea:
that they
love in truth
with all sense
of Christian
love
divorced from self
the air of beauty
and her pomp.

The poor know naught
but death
they do not free
they obliterate.

The
cigarette
smoker
said

I'd
rather
waste it
than give
it

away

why hast Thou
 forsaken me
 said the brave boy
didst make
a pact
to smoke
 cigars
 with the snake,
 while
 I
 was
 here?

America should have
 two churches
 one for people
 who smoke
and one for those
 who don't

MOODS FOR SUNDAY

Koan

Master
is
beauty
something
which
changes
you
into
something
which
can change?

There's one thing about you,
baby

 said Sir Cirrhosis,
of all the witches I've known
you're the merriest
 and he died

 with style.

He died with style
 said the witch.

Yes,
 said the wind
 which rose from the spirit
 of the gin
give him honor in Hell.

One
 nerve
screams
 before
 you
 fall

one
 nerve
screams
 before
 you
 fall
 said
 the
 ledge
on the
window
 in the
 nine-
 teenth
 floor

the remembered musk
of wood-smoke at dusk
in Cambridge
 and New Haven

The Economy of Love

Your eyes
 are beautiful
said my
 love.
Yes said I
 eyes of
 mine have
 seen your
 breast
 and so are
 beautiful.

(but my heart
 was immersed
 in that
 calculus
 of the soul
 which measures
 the profit
 and cost
 of conversions
 from beauty
 to power)

Your eyes
 are beautiful
said my love
 and have
 left
 me.

I know
the
belly
of Mexico
must smell
like the trail
of a
woodburning
bus.

Oh Mexico
if all your
sewers
were scents,
and your
modern
apartments
lost their cracks
would your women
cease to look
so sad
and your men so silly
Oh Mexico
let your deserts
bloom
and your mustaches
turn to gold.

One of us
will
be
better
looking
when it's
all
over.

Babes,
you got
nostrils
like
devil's feet

DEVILS

Somehow
I've never
quite
believed
in women
 said the Lord
as he gave
a sad
goose
to Adam
and banished
him.

not you
but your cure
do I fear
O my love
for your cure
is a
 curse
upon me

It was unreality
 which waited
 on a midnight trail
 in that fierce
 jungle of eternity
 he heard murmuring
 on the other side

Oh, night of the jungle,
 God of mercy
 wept the suicide
do not ask me
to reconnoiter
 this
 dark
 trail
when I am now
 without
 hands.

Hunting

men who go out to kill deer
 hope to find in the blood
 of the new dead
the poems of my flesh
 said the deer in the forest

those
who are alive
look to others
for a mirror

the dead grow walls
half-dead, one drinks
 alone at night
 and writes poems

bad ones said self
sorry pity
should write so sad
and beg for tears

Art
cannot
recover
what was lost
to the cowardice
of the
knife
and yet
the blade
was invented
by a knight
in God's
employ
said Lear
mad with the
treacheries
of progress
and good
intention.

MODES—

✓

As it grows
the flower
breaks
through the stone.

It has yet
to prove
itself
against
the clay.

Gray without grace
day.

I know
a town
with
sighs
of
sea
smiled
the
white
witch

I know
a town
which
sails
the
sun

I know
a town
where
light
is dry
and
boats
come
home
with
silver
in their
hold

THE HARBORS
OF THE
MOON

OVER

Harbors

~~Gray without grace~~
~~day.~~

where
boats
come
home
with
silver
in their
hold

(Do not
grieve
the
death
of
little
fish
They
are
lights
which
smell *peach*
the
deep)

I know
a town
with
sighs
of sea

white
with
the
tides
of me

white
as the
spine
of the
sea.

It would
be
an aid
if the
blind
came
to the
game
because
their cars
are
clean
said
the dream

✓

①

How can you
say
you're
only
three-quarters
a man,
why you're
completely
a man
said the
lady
in a
three-quarter voice.

Definition of a Lady

She grasps
the root
while kissing
the bud

The Adventurer

I don't mind
a party that
gets
a little rough
but did you
have to throw
up
in my foyer
said the lady.

Despair never
said the
drunk,
I'll pick

it up
I'll really
pick it up
because I don't
believe
in leaving
my leavings
at a ladies'
door
when she's a lady
like you
you crappy
old
unhappy
bag of an armpit
anyone ever
say
you're beautiful
said the drunk as he fell on his nose
trying to kiss lady and her fortune.

Ladies
teach
one
leçon
seul
one
that
the
essence
of
perfume
is
duty

(OVER)

✓
(34)

I
was
hysterical
stated
the girl
I
dropped
my
god
damned con
tact lens
down
the drain

Then
this
creep
called
at four
A.M.

Hel
lo Kook
he said

Guess what:

I just
found
your
contact
lens.

Jacks and Jills

In my line
of work
you meet
some of
the
nicest
people
said

the going
young
mortician

Many of them
are waiting
for the wills
to come through

Sometimes
there are
chills
or spills.

Ills alert me.

My name is

Vowel Chimes, Esquire

✓ ?
Registers

(2)
You must meet her.

She's rather nice.

she's an

absolute

brigand

who came out

of a ~~whorehouse~~ *brothel*

in Baltimore.

Then she married

a Jewish man

from Macy's

And then my father.

Now she has

the most terrible

dining room

in New York.

It's all gold.

Last year

she finished

decorating her house

and charged

one hundred dollars

a plate

to let people in.

No drinks.

Of course

it was for

a marvelous charity

called Baskets.

For people

without

arms

or legs.

Isn't that nice?

A wandering in prose:

for Hemingway

November, 1960

That first unmanageable cell
of the cancer which was to
stifle his existence arrived
to him on a morning when by
an extreme act of the will
he chose not to strike his
mother. Since this was
thirtysix hours after he
had stabbed his wife, and
his mother had come at a time
when he wished to see no one
in order to savor the woes
and pawed prides of his soul,
(what a need for leisure
has the criminal heart) his
renunciation of violence
was civilized, too civilized
for his cells which proceeded
to revolt. But then it is
the thesis of this summary
that civilization spawns
cancer in every corner of
every church whose smell
is stale with the fatigues
of such devotion as lost its
memory on the long road
to ecstasy from
habit.

✓

Togetherness

My flesh must smell like an old tire
my sex is bitter and gone
my days are leafless and all sleep
 said the housewife
 going to the specialist
one knows what kind

but in the waiting room
she was racked by a plague
from the pots of the American
 miasma—our magazines,
 and so lady murmured
 too quietly
even for her mind to hear:

Reader's Digest, please save *your* soul
and leave mine free to contemplate
eternity which must be more
 than I glimpse for myself now
 an endless promenade
across a field of baked old beans
 a cataract of dishwater
 regurgitated by the memory
of champagne I never drank
 and kings I never kissed

①

Eternities

120

I'm rich
 said
Irish
 derby
 slopping
 a drink
 on the
 floor

So I've always
 missed
 the pleasures
 of the poor.

Taste his spit!
 said the sawdust
 it's a scandal
 and a shame

Naught but outer limbo
 said the roach
 on his way
 on his fraught-filled
 way, on his fraught-
filled way to the door
 and toward the
 stair
 of his own.

Very hip guy
very hip
which is to
say
that he knows
a
little
about
fornication
and a lot
about
how
to
employ
its
teachings
in the
business
world.

OVER
Irina Daler
(Eternities)

2
29

When he reached
the cracked enamel
in the kitchen
of his pad
he made a
tour
of quarters
leaving
molecules
like pennies
on the oilcloth
of the
poor—
five molecules
of scotch
to every
plate

But the fumes had drunk
his mind to stuff
and roachie slept
an emperor's sleep
dreaming of previous lives
in derby hats
when he had slopped
the whiskey
to the floor
crying for the pleasures
of the poor.

I used
to think
my life
would be
a
destiny
and now
I realize
it's but a fate
said a man
I met
in Bellevue
for
stabbing
his
brother
with a
kitchen
knife

(Penicillin, chief weapon against venereal disease, is losing some of its punch. In 1943, 100,000 units of the drug were considered sufficient to effect a cure for gonorrhea. Today, doses of one million units are commonplace, and many physicians inject more than two million. Yet in Japan, for example, 30 percent of gonorrhea cases have failed to respond even to massive doses.—Reader's Digest, MARCH 1961)

One
man's
meat
is an-
other's
milk

said the aficionado

as
he
skimmed
the
cream

from his
third drop
and transported it holy

to a
tube which knew a
syringe.

Interplanetary

A plague is
coming
named

Virus Y S X
still unsolved
promises to be
proof
against
antibiotics
psychoanalysis
research projects
vitamins
awards
crash programs
crash diets
symposiums
foundations
rest
rehabilitation
tranquilizers
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surgery
brainwashing
lobotomies
rises in status
box office boffo
perversions
and
even
a
good
piece
of

When that unhappy day
comes to America
let the Russians
take over.
The best defense is
infection.

No

Destroy them
say the poor
we cannot breathe
nor give
until we etch
on their rich nerve
the cruel razor
and heartless club
of our past,
those sediments of
waste
which eurbed
our genes
and flattened
the vision we
would give
the chromosome.

Yes, destroy them
say the poor
burn them, rob them
gorge their tears
and such half of beauty
lost to pomp
will flower
unglimpsed wonders
in the rose,
will flower
unglimpsed wonders
in the rows.

I wonder,
said the Lord
I wonder if I know the answer
any more.

the

Stripped of its
distinctions
life is a flat city
whose isolated spurs
cut the sky
like housing projects.
Think of the air
whose heart is bruised
by touching such artifacts.
(Does the cutworm forgive
the plough?)

I tell you, say the rich,
the poor are naught
but dirty wind
welling in air-shafts
over the cinders
and droppings of
the past, their
voices thick
with grease
and ordure,
sewer-greed
to corrode the ear
with the horrors
of the past
and the voids
of new stupidity.

One could drown
waiting for the poor
to make
one fine distinction.

Yes, destroy us
say the rich
and you lose
the roots
of God.

Mood
is a
congregation
of souls
in the cells.

Those
who govern
a body
of murdered hopes
and
cold will
are subject to
sudden defeats
of mood
so severe
as to pose
the question:

OVER

Lower Classes

~~rows~~

★
rose

+
rows

Is mood a temple
which gives us
sanctuary
against
the desire
of our cells
to return to
their beginnings
under a
new master
who promises
that he
will not
repeat
the hesitations,
compassions
and
aesthetic
com-
punctions of God
about
pleasure
profit
and
progress
but
instead
will rip up
the roots
and give us
the broad
macadam
of
civic virtue
tranquilized pain
eternity
without fire
and sugary
for the syrup
of the peach.

To the lower classes

Noblesse
Oblige
has one rule
and
one rule only

You must be
so nice
so bright
so quick and
so well turned
that
no one need
tell you
a second time.

Tell me what?
that the world
is well-lost
for love
and the upper
classes
are the
law above?

I tell you this:
if the
upper classes
are kin to God
in style—
(which is one hypothesis—
we do not ignore:—
how else account
for elegance?)

if the
upper classes
are kin to God
in style
then God has no love
but guilt, nor a style
apart from fashion,
no courage but to
do in duty
what
one does not desire
and no worth
but for His love
at beauty

For there
is noble's work
their plea:
that they
love in truth
with all sense
of Christian
love
divorced from self
the air of beauty
and her pomp.

The poor know naught
but death
they do not free
they obliterate.

A wandering in prose:

for Hemingway

November, 1960

That first unmanageable cell
of the cancer which was to
stifle his existence arrived
to him on a morning when by
an extreme act of the will
he chose not to strike his
mother. Since this was
thirtysix hours after he
had stabbed his wife, and
his mother had come at a time
when he wished to see no one
in order to savor the woes
and pawed prides of his soul,
(what a need for leisure
has the criminal heart) his
renunciation of violence
was civilized, too civilized
for his cells which proceeded
to revolt. But then it is
the thesis of this summary
that civilization spawns
cancer in every corner of
every church whose smell
is stale with the fatigues
of such devotion as lost its
memory on the long road
to ecstasy from
habit.

Togetherness

My flesh must smell like an old tire
my sex is bitter and gone
my days are leafless and all sleep
 said the housewife
 going to the specialist
one knows what kind

but in the waiting room
she was racked by a plague
from the pots of the American
 miasma—our magazines,
 and so lady murmured
 too quietly
even for her mind to hear:

Reader's Digest, please save *your* soul
and leave mine free to contemplate
eternity which must be more
 than I glimpse for myself now
 an endless promenade
across a field of baked old beans
 a cataract of dishwater
 regurgitated by the memory
of champagne I never drank
 and kings I never kissed

It would
 be
an aid
if the
 blind
 came
to the
 game
because
their cars
 are
 clean
 said
the dream

THE HARBORS
OF THE
MOON

where
boats
come
home
with
silver
in their
hold

(Do not
grieve
the
death
of
little
fish
They
are
lights
which
smell
the
deep)

I know
a town
with
sighs
of sea

white
with
the
tides
of me

white
as the
spine
of the
sea.

Gray without grace
day.

I know
a town
with
sighs
of
sea
smiled
the
white
witch

I know
a town
which
sails
the
sun

I know
a town
where
light
is dry
and
boats
come
home
with
silver
in their
hold

You're not as brave
as your qualities
he declared
So people like me
say people like you
and wonder if it
is true

Shadow of tears
said she
Nothing to do with me

Night Clubs

Evil
 fingers
up
 and
down
 my
spine
 remind
 me
 that
 sex
 is
 not
 always
 divine.
But
 sometimes
 it is
 with
 the most
 astonishing
 collection
 of
 horrible
 pig people.

Vodka is fine
we agreed,
one can keep
one's character,
it doesn't do
funny things
to the style
of the soul
departing,
it doesn't
get into
the end
of one's
fingers
and leave them weak.

You must never let
anything
get into
the end
of your fingers
but

Love
said evil
getting up
to get another drink.

I won't stay in
with married men
any more
said the wise girl
they're too agreeable,
it's a little too much
like curling
up
with the good book.

You mean
a
good book

Oh, dear,
did I say
the
good book
sighed the witch.

You have
so many
poems
about
cancer.

Mr
Cancer
and
Miss
Catatonia
were
very
good
for each other

but they were
cousins
so they
did

nothing
about
it.

If
Harry Golden
is the gentile's
Jew
can I be-
come the Golden
Goy?

It's me
or
my readers.

To the ghost of his late highness the Senator

Another orphan
said McCarthy
let's have a high mass
and kiss her ass
before we kick
her cunt in,
sister superior.

Oooooooo

Is this poem good for the Jews?
asked Reverend Godspce
of the Inter-Faith Council
for Tolerance

Muscular Dystrophy
and
Communities-of-Cancer

Kick his cunt in too
said McCarthy
Reverend Godspce is
a Communist

You're fucking aye
said all the louts
in all the bars
in Queens
and they were right
for once.

doing the limbo bit

it's good
enough
for
me

Every time
I move
I squash
something
said
Loathesome.

Catnip for the Kiddies

Does the football team
eat a lot?
asked the
announcer

Oh, I think so, Jim
those football
boys are
pretty big
down there.

When did you two
titans
last meet?

Well, bud, it was in
November
1960
that fateful
gray day
in Philadelphia
The weather was
so bad we almost
stayed in our
hotel and ate each other.
Our boys were
keyed-up, I tell you.

Circumcision

They say
that
women
don't get
cancer
of the
cervix
as much
from Jewish
men.

They don't.

They give
it
to
Jewish
men.

Cancer Gulch

What's
he got?

(Made
a little
money

Lost
a little
love)

Miami.

Junkies

chant
a song
in
bitter
prose which
went:

we
are
saving
our
pennies
to buy
a bond
to aid
the drive
of the United
Corporations of Community
who wish
to construct
a new
and im-
proved
rest home
for all
the
cancer-
pushers
on the
team.

Boola-
boola,
boola-
boole.

I've always
missed
the pleasures
of the poor.

Harlem East

Now

these
children
want me
to roast
their
tea
said The
Man with
the bag.

Do they

think
I'm a
mother
with
shades
and a
furled
umbrella?

Go to sea,

Jim,

I have

something
in my
head
that
would
really
kill
you

Amour

I still

love

him

deeply

she said

deeply

out of her

double

chin.

Cafe Society

It always
ruins
a
meal
to walk
half a block.

'This is
genteel
poetry.
One thought
at a time.

what's doing
mother

well
I'll tell you
brother
you're
the only
brother
I know
who's got a
mother
that's your
brother

The English
have a sense
of ambush
about vulgarity;
it is:
do you
descend
the steps
properly?

I'm not altogether
nervous

I mean if we
have another
drink

I think

I could concentrate
on the drink
and not
the
time.

Definition of a Hero:

He
thrives
in
dikes.

Still . . .

Mr
Cancer
and
Miss
Catatonia
were
good
for each other

Husbands

I want to
be a
fine
woman
and a
great
mother
to my
children
and
oh yes
you
she said

Wanted
without
wings
is stone
dew
lady

Gray
mandarins
without
grace
is
day
with prey
you're
a king
with
feet
of clay

No,
lass
I'm
a
mandarin
said
and reached
for a
beer
first
of the
blow

You can't
have
a beer
Momma
says
no

By God
if had a
momma
like
you
I'd
never
a
reached
the age
of six

Wanted
without
wings
is
stone
do

prac
tising
karate jabs
to
leather
of booth,
judo
chops
on
edge
of
table.

why,
asked
young
intent
cowardly
director
know
in
theatre,

Why do that,
why
not leave
violence
alone?

Because
said
when learn
do this

can
give
penknife
away

So long
as
you
use
a knife,
there's
some
love
left.

yoghurt
fart
church
for
art

blood
and
wood
is
bread

mother
menstrual
spike
and
mass

Murder

foetus
feathers
food

earning
butter
bone
and
break

fairies
father
flutes

homocide is hairy

Royal
is
the
rat who runs the race

morons murder mutes

You let everything stand
until it's knocked over
and then
you go over
and write
your own
ruins

The murderer
said:

I owe
a death
to eternity

My soul
is not
complete
until
the eye
of my
vision
is
blinded
by
blood.

O sweet tear
of the victim
blind am I
with love
for thee.

A writer who
has power
should use it
to extract
such benefits
from his
publisher

as
give
his
words

room
to
breathe

I want my
line
to
strike
like
a snake

A snake
can't strike
in a box

you break
up your
line
like
ee
cum
mings
I notice

n
o heb re a
ksitu pd
iffe
r
e
nt

I am looking
for the
fish who
swim in the
spaces

ee likes the
herbs
in the
letters

cite

besi desh e'sb

r)

That ill
whose
first
symptom
is
a
monotony
of nights

A MONOTONY
OF
ILLS

Cancer
is growing
ivy
professor
which spreads
like college

A Well-Integrated Ego

People
 who
despise
themselves
 wear
 dingy
 under-
 garments
 said
 the
 psychiatrist
flinging
the sorrows
 of his
 seed
 out, off, and away
 into a
 white
 linen
 hand-
 kerchief
 with a
 hand-
 rolled
 edge.

Charm

Drinker
with a
problem said:
I'll drink
to that
even if
it's not
quite
true.

The Suburban Arts

Putting up
with
something
you don't
like
and calling
it charming
spells
age-in-the-face,
dear,
said
the
skin
graft
as it
said
hello
and moved into its new home
on the neck

A PAPER ON THE
DIFFERENTIALS OF
STATUS IN THE
EGO-FORMATION
OF THE JEWISH
HOMOSEXUAL

One
of
the bones
of
contention
is
that
Franz
calls
me
a rabbi
and
I
call
him
one

Chinese Meeting

Let us go

our

separate

ways

and

meet again

said I

to the

diseases.

Don't leave

was told

me.

You director

of corporation.

One

nerve

screams

before

you

fall

said

the

ledge

on

the

window

in

the

nineteenth

floor

Witchcraft

When I was
your age
twenty
seven
a dame
could
say
I'll put
a curse
on
you.

On
I would say
put a curse
on me
and wonder
why
my voice
would break.

3.

But
in the
evenings
they met
and had
beers
together
in Irish bars
which looked
the proper hair
of fashion
askew
the type

And as they drank
into
the warm
spring
evenings
the remembered musk
of wood-smoke at dusk
brought
tenderness
to
liberty
and
irony
to
fate
and they
would

1.

Men

who work
at Time
have a
life expect-
tancy
which is
not long
said the
young man
from
Newsweek

Junkies

2.

Those
who
bat out
the poop
for
the other sheet
don't use up
a thing
in
my scheme
of space
said the
young blood
from Yale

I
love Christ
said the Epis-
copalian school
instructor
but
he's not
in the most
secure of taste

because
none of us
are
altogether
at ease
here
in the light
of the green
cut
out of the
wood

for in the light of the wood
green from the cut, we killed Him
thee and me

"The worst to be said about mothers
is that they are prone
to give kisses of congratulations
which make you feel
like a battleship
on which someone
is breaking a bottle"
said the figure of speech
in a voice
which
awarded art
to itself.

Metaphors may be heartless.
In the salon they are savage.

One enters rooms wet
with a razor's light
from the tongue of
fifteen bloods
ready to dissect
the fornications
of their fathers.

Their hope?

That
surgical excisions
upon the past
may illumine
the flesh of the
company
with a luminous blaze
pure as wit
in a moment of murder.
Not all light is love.

Courtship

It's a fine wine
 heartly as one drinks it,
 peppery
 yet it seems
 to come
 florid
 and
 soft

Yes, I answered,
 we have an
 old peasant
 saying:
It's a fine wine
 but the devil
 farted
 in it
 once.

The Adventurer

I don't mind
 a party that
 gets
 a little rough
but did you
 have to throw
 up
 in my foyer
 said the lady.

Despair never
 said the
 drunk,

I'll pick
 it up
I'll really
 pick it up
 because I don't
 believe
 in leaving
 my leavings
 at a ladies'
 door
when she's a lady
 like you
 you crappy
 old
 unhappy
 bag of an armpit
 anyone ever
 say
 you're beautiful
 said the drunk as he fell on his nose
 trying to kiss lady and her fortune.

Ladies
teach
one
lecon
scul
one
that
the
essence
of
perfume
is
duty

I
was
hysterical
stated
the girl
I
dropped
my
god
damned con
tact lens
down
the drain

Then
this
creep
called
at four
A.M.

Hel
lo Kook
he said

Guess what:

I just
found
your
contact
lens.

Jacks and Jills

In my line
of work
you meet
some of
the
nicest
people
said
the going
young
mortician
Many of them
are waiting
for the wills
to come through
Sometimes
there are
chills
or spills.
Ills alert me.
My name is
Vowel Chimes, Esquire

Registers

You must meet her.
She's rather nice.
 she's an
 absolute
 brigand
 who came out
 of a whorehouse
 in Baltimore.
Then she married
 a Jewish man
 from Macy's
And then my father.
Now she has
 the most terrible
 dining room
 in New York.
It's all gold.
Last year
 she finished
 decorating her house
 and charged
 one hundred dollars
 a plate
 to let people in.
No drinks.
Of course
 it was for
 a marvelous charity
 called Baskets.
For people
 without
 arms
 or legs.
Isn't that nice?

Protestants

She believed
 in the
 efficacy
 of patterns
So she worked
 on the
 Avenue
 of the
 Madison
 and
 sold
 glop

The steel
 and
 glass
 of some womb
 which
 lacked
 the love
 to
 give me eyes

United Citizen's Protest

Gather
me
a
monotony
of
names.

Unhappy Marriage

She says
these things

I drop
like dead
meat-balls.

Mon dieu,
Feinspan,
do I have
to keep
saying
I'm pleased
to be here
Yes
I'm happy
to be
with those
I love.
Send the bill.