

A LARK UP THE NOSE OF TIME

Wayne F. burke

BareBackPress

Fat Bastard

I sailed down the hillside
on my silver saucer
and when the saucer hit the road
I jumped up running
as long-legged Big Louie,
lanky and peanut-headed,
chased me;
his eyes squinted in a raisin-face
the white wall of my house down the street
bounced up and down
my rubberized clod-hopper boots
I ran up the drive
an ice-ball slammed into the side of my face
Big Louie screamed,
triumphant,
I ran up the frozen porch steps
bawling
and barged into the kitchen
where my Uncle,
home from work at the gas station,
stood before the stove
cooking:
“Big Louie hit me!” I shouted
then ducked
in case my Uncle tried to slap me
for interrupting his Saturday afternoon;
“get in the car,” he growled
he came out of the house wearing his black Navy pea-coat
and looking like a mitten with a head,
we floated down the white street
snow banks to the push button-windows
of the big Buick Electra
to the skating rink
where Big Louie
his pals
stood in a phalanx
arms crossed on chests,
brave in a group,
like wolves--
my Uncle stepped up to them,
short
round
a svelte 320 pounds
a saturnine face
his leather hand shot out
and Louie fell down,
got up
his face
red like a stop sign
he ran
like a deer
loping strides up and over the snowbank
and into the tree line...
My Uncle got back into the car,
said “he won't call me
a 'fat bastard' again.”

Babies

a priest from the big city
came to town
and spoke
at our confirmation
he was stout
with a broad beefy face
and pudgy hands that punched out
as he told us
that a kiss
by itself
was not a sin
but that “prolonged kissing” was
because
he said
it led to other sins
which
he suggested
we might well imagine
and I did
or tried to
ten years old
and concluded that
prolonged kissing was what
brought babies into the world
and so
when Chief Larson from the neighborhood
asked me if I knew how babies were made
I said “prolonged kissing”
and he laughed himself
silly
but I knew
that I was right
because the holy priest
had said so.

Disgust

we shoveled the snow off the line kiln
road
which iced-over
and we rode our sleds
sixty miles an hour
down
and out into a back street
where we took our chances
with cars
and one day
between the time it took me to hike
from bottom of the road
to top
a snow plow had come
and gone
and left a snow drift
that I hit
and went airborne
like a ski jumper
and I landed
on my sled
but my head out beyond
the steering bar
and I broke my front teeth
off
on the road
and got up
and ran home
each icy stinging breath
and burst into the warm steamy kitchen
and cried "I broke my teeth!"
and my grandmother turned to me
concernedly
but my sister gave me a look
of disgust
which
I hated her for.

Bill

stepped off of the town bus one day
and onto the field
where we played football
and told us his name was "Bill"
and that he had watched us
from the bus
and that
if we would let him
he would be our manager
and try and arrange games
between us and teams from
other towns...
He wore glasses and had a long
horse-face plus white shirt and
black slacks on a bowling-pin shaped
body;
he came by every day afterward
to watch us;
he said he would be our score-keeper
and that he would write stories about us
and have the stories published in the
newspaper...
At the dinner table my Uncle
asked about Bill
and I told him what Bill had said
he would do for us
and the next day my Uncle
showed up at the field
and told Bill to get lost and to stay
the hell away from us
and me and the other kids
did not know why my Uncle
was so upset or
why he had told Bill to go away
because,
we all agreed,
Bill was a nice guy
a very very nice guy.