

I

The sun's bright eye
is zeroed in

the zeros add up
and multiply

as the sunflower bends

as we lose and win
but mostly lose
and seek an hour in the sun
zeroed in
idle and unburdened
lolling
through numbered days
hours
moving toward an end

Last Kiss

Moving from mouth to mouth

kissing every girl in the bar
their boyfriends stand aside and
stare and one bitch has a fit after
I smack her lips and soon I am
outside and lying on the sidewalk
beneath a tree and listening to
wind rustle through the leaves
and if god has a voice that is it
the soothing shush and rush of
sibilance, the whispered hush and
sudden gust of exhaled breath
calming me but not enough
because later I climbed the side of
a building and broke in through
a third floor window and came to
sitting on a bed in a dark room
and heard the footsteps of a giant
outside the door which flew open
to let a cop in who handcuffed me
so tightly the cuffs stayed on my wrists
for years.

Vests

A yellow jacket on a dandelion
does not have a jacket on but a
fuzzy sort of vest, like mohair
sweaters girls in my high school wore
that made their tits – those who had
them – resemble snow cones. High

School was a prison with a vice-principal patrolling the yard. Bells told us when to move. Most kids were going nowhere except to work. I had ambition and sweat rings beneath my arm pits and pimples on my face. I got drunk on Saturday nights and chased cock-teasers. Beat up hippies. Wore a red football jacket with white lightning bolts down the sleeves; name and number across the chest. Only queers and nerds wore vests.

TV Land

Sitting in front of the black & white television watching Danny Thomas, Andy of Mayberry, Darren & Samantha... All their problems were solved in half an hour, while mine were never solved at all. The Beaver, Chip, Ernie, Opie, Little Ricky... They had it made. Nobody ever beat the shit out of them. No big kids tortured them. They never peed the bed. They did not eat SPAM. They did not take baths in the sink. They did

not have nocturnal emissions. They did not get worms. They were not beat with hair brush or belt. They were not told to go outside and to stay there...They had it good. In TV Land.

Rookie

Clam Diggers, Ring Dings, Good & Plenty,
Tar Babies, Rob & Laura Petrie...

I trained my arm to make the long
throw from third to first.

I was another Brooks Robinson
or at least Frank Malzone,
though I did not take many ground balls
off my chest because I did not have
much of a chest or much of anything...

Had a glove handed down from my
brother. Had a bed to sleep in. Had a
name and so-called family. What else?
Had a snowball's chance in hell but
did not know that then. Did not know
much. Knew I wanted to play. Knew I

was better than most. Knew a few of
the state capitals, and names of some
dinosaurs. Knew I was alone:
or at least suspected as much.

Never had A Room

Never had a room of my own until
I was sixteen,
always had a bed;
my two brothers and uncle
had beds too
in the same room;
my uncle came home late
stomping up stairs and
falling into bed like a tree trunk
into empty cans;
his snores were like a language
of the deaf and dumb;
in the morning he retched
into the toilet then stumped
to his bed – fat man on Popsicle stick legs –
and sat to put on his gas station uniform
grunting as he bent
to tug up socks.
A bastard he could be
who gave me backhanded slaps

and kicks from size ten shoes and
once whipped me with his belt
as I squirmed on the back yard lawn
howling loud enough for the neighbors and
the world to hear
but they never did.