Recent ancestors

Quinton Duval

The University of Montana

1974

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RECENT ANCESTORS

by
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B.A., California State University at Sacramento, 1971
M.A., California State University at Sacramento, 1973
Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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iii
I

RECENT ANCESTORS
Names

I have this feeling that cannot
be held by me.
It comes in the form of names
for people I have never met
and never see, a dream
that lies and waits
for me in bed. I never remember
if there's anything there.
It doesn't matter.
The eyes of Karl Peinter, 1892 - 1930,
fill my eyes. The heart of
Peter Cloud begins to take the
place of my heart. My eyes belong
to me, but I wear glasses and
cannot see over long distances.
I have hands that are not
complicated. I am always tired
and want to lie down again.
This is a statement of my union.
I like best the way the waves
break inside the heart like a
voice, with a health about it;
the underside of vision, the glimpse
of another place, the name again.
Broken into syllables that fit the lips.
Recent Ancestors

for Joan

I think of you as I write this.
For some reason I also think of
Q.B. Gibson. I can see him, lying in
what for years I thought was blood.
When I found out about heart attacks,
in my head I changed the blood to
the soul's dampness. As if you died
on the ground, there would be a stain
left there; like oil.
There was one his size under the
pepper tree. Do you remember that?
This grandfather of mine walks slowly
along the evening. He passes
the spot under the tree - reaches
his place of death, head bleeding from
the rooster's barb, eggs stain his shirt.
He lies down in the same position
Mina found him in. And slowly goes
from her arms into the dirt.
Jesus, I am lonely. I see the silos
west of here and think of you,
changing my life.
A Tent of Hands

I set up a tent of hands for you;
they hold each other firmly, left to right,
left to right, and so on.
They make a place for you in front of me
and make the reason we live 1200 miles apart
not right.

Live in my hands every morning.
I will shave them and wash them and
fold them up for you to keep in your
drawer and wear at night when you are alone.
If you wear them with someone else, and
this is the truth, they will deprive you
of your happiness, slapping your soft face
and choking your lover in the middle of
his one silver kiss. You will have to
take my hands and hide them and I will want
them back but they will be useless.
Just rotten fruit on the wrists.

I am lonely and crazy for you to be here
and make this pen go another way.
Come tell me to live in your heart
and the hands will let go.
My Father Has Told Me

My father has told me nothing
of his life before I came to on this
earth. He has not hidden it, but
lost it, as pieces of himself fell
into the flesh of his children.

By some decision, we are the closest.
Perhaps the first was to prove something
to himself. The third and fourth pure logic.
But the second was unnecessary.
There was no secret discussion when the
rain held on so long. It just happened.

My father has told me it was cold
the day I was born. He waited twenty-five
years to tell me that. Because I was not old
enough to use it. Because he has had time
to remember.

He had brown hair, thin even then.
I am twenty-five and cannot stop
my hair from leaving either.
When I am thirty, he will tell me
something else: The month he will die,
why my hair falls out too. The day
he will die, why he used to only buy Fords.
The logic in his plan to have four children,
one every three years. The hour he will die.
What to do when my hair falls out. How a root
canal feels. The time he will die, to the
second (he is an engineer) to the exact hair
that falls out the instant his soul jerks
loose from our similar bodies.
Learning that I am a person

In a way I never knew this before.

My eyes break with tears;

pieces of vision and they do not go away.

They move slowly and

allow me, my wish is. . . allow me

to see through the faults.

I don't know if that is believable.

I don't know if there are even houses

and trees and all the rest because

it is not like that somehow.

You see I am learning to be alone.

I feel the bad things in me touch

like metals. I find the things I like

and keep them in my hair and features.
Poem to myself on my birthday, 1973

This is the difference. You can only attract divorcees from this point on. No young women to talk to you any more. There is nothing for them to say, Words like nice man, gentleman, honesty, come roaring up into your life. Not evil, not killer, not liar. No whip into the eyes.

And one child, two children, three, four become the symbol for things you were never good at. Lets go away, Talk, saying lets go home, somewhere, wearing dark glasses helped once in a while, like hiding the face in the hands. Couching the tongue in honesty, lets go away together, the truth, no one can hurt you for it, never lie, it is my birthday, it isn't worth the pain, the deception growing from the waist up, from the heart down; Take a hand, a visibly older hand, kiss it all over the hair, the eyes, the lips, the whole face. It will come off on you, scare you, lets go away, into doing something you don't want to do, scare you. The hands grab the wheel start the engine, go away, come back, scare you, no guarantees, no fire, no coffee, Come back, meet the children, you are only twenty-five, What do you want from me, 4 children who won't like you, 6 months to be here in, again your face on my arm, it is my birthday, your head on my arm, I could twist it off if I wanted to, Lets go away together, you know I like myself, yes, I do, I know what I want to do, It is my birthday, this is not it, don't be a part of my pain, stay away from me, It is my birthday, stay away from that being clever all the time, working under the skin, following through with the joke, lets go away, go away, it is my birthday. This is a poem for myself, on my twenty-fifth birthday. It will never be written. It is an honest lie. It is finished because the end crops up in the next few lines and there is nothing to say because it is my birthday and it is my birthday and the next one will not be the same.
Absent Star

for my brother John

After you left, I took the green marbles that were your eyes. Lying there in a suit with no back, I thought the strange silk touched your shoulders and buttocks like women's underwear. The sad shoes that looked fine but split down the back, harelipped, cheating my father.

Once I twisted your arm so hard I swear I felt my own break. The turkish moon I banged in your forehead with a stone, has caught me like an invisible hook and teases me until I break down and cry.

The woman you married over and over again lives on. She counts the minutes like money and looks at me as if to demand payment. I do what you would have wanted: Look away and name everything I see. I shake my own hand and pretend we are making up for good.
through the battle

For someone, tonight, the moon rises. Almost full, it waits for the missing piece to come back soon.
  Signs go on through the dark and remind us we are not alone. A touch on the shoulder and the bed is no longer a safe place - no place to be in the darkness.
  We talk to ourselves for a while. I am not used to this; or, I am used to this, but it seems like it has been a long time.
  My mother, god rest her soul, before she left this earth she stayed around for weeks saying 'au revoir' . . .
  I come to terms with this: It doesn't have to make sense. Believe me, a soul walks back and forth for me. A place I want to be is just around the corner. I hear the whisper of 1000 fingers. It is like the sound of the sea. Everyone waits for me, mother.
II

A SINGULAR EVENT
Pride

Tornado was the word we made,
rolled in our mouths and spit.
We turned the picnic table over
and the old lady's birdbath.
The jars of water sat like a family.
The tub filled for no good reason.

I was never afraid: I cruised
in a dark slow metabolism.
Learning to read naked to my father,
drawing my life with steady hand.
My mother planted her visions.

The picture showed the tornado
hit the river like a big leg
and jump the ninety miles
to Orlando. We cried into sleep.
The natural disaster just the humidity,
where things grow fast and crazy,
and the waves catch children and
drown them.
Kiss it, Break it

A singular event, a night of touching close to the matted roots of logic. . .
A pleasure as dark and drumming
as a heart, sitting alone in a trunk of flesh. I tell you all the famous lies.
One by one, we laugh at the good ones;
the old favorites. Good through three decades, they are still true.

Some grey, cheap day when I drive you to the airport, I will look back from
my saddest face and the sick puff of black an inch above the mountain will be
my heart dissolving inside my chest: ashes that fill the lung cans and choke the bright terror of loneliness.

I have made a pact with you, and you don't know it. If you break it, you will hear, at the very second, a voice like mine rebuke you and begin to fill with that emotional water and gurgle to a close. A cough of despair and the phone ringing in the kitchen.
I darken my little room.  
So quiet now - the only sound 
the air traffic above. 
Groaning in the night like 
a dreamer, a dreamer comes 
and shakes me awake. 
I am thankful. My hand 
has been caught in the keys 
of the typewriter and 
I dreamt of being bitten 
to death. 

I don't know what to do. 
My weight, the weight of my body, 
leaves me. The two halves of 
my ass no longer pressing against 
the chair. There is no chair. 

The cold air licks my face 
through a fist-sized hole 
in the window. I see a shadow; 
a soul like a black baseball flies 
over the fence. Out of the yard. 
If I go and check, I know 
it won't be there. Anyway, 
it is too cold, and too dark, 
and I am afraid I will lose myself 
and never come back.
On this day of colorless sky, after the rain, when the coolest part of spring is upon us again.
I am feeling sad today.
At this moment, the doctor must be looking into my woman's cavity. Something is wrong.
He claims to search for the still unborn wing, that could straighten all the sticky feathers to one geometry, and fly like a black jet from the hole.

The crazy vacuity I feel is nothing new. I am losing something invisible. After careful thought, I have determined it to be my innocence. Even if I could see it, it would slip away through my damp fingers.

After careful thought, it is my love I am losing. I care for no one anymore and my hand stays over my eyes more and more.

After thinking about it, I am losing my vision. I see a young bird, with no wings, and yellow eyes the color of sulphur. It will not fly and frightens me by pecking in the black powdered tears at my feet.
The Wedding

That day the corpse walked in, everyone was silent. They could not believe it. I went, with my mouth full of food, thin-stemmed crystal glued between two fingers.

The bride's mother cried, but she was not happy. The father thought of all that wasted liquor.

Everybody followed, with their hats pulled down to the ears. We sayg the hymn everyone loved and day-dreamed about the perilous sea. The stones along the route joined hands and we all felt magnificent as we pounded the whiteness out of our chests.

One by one, we lined up to urinate into the snow, golden rings joined like a steaming chain across the hills.
a blow on the ear

Goodbye. She walked slowly out of my life: her mouth formed the words of a poem, shaped like the suitcase she carried below her wrist.

Goodbye, came the answer. The door cracked behind my ears, to the wind sneaking away through a window in the rear of the house.

Those words, what were they, that stunned me like a blow on the ear? That made me blink and fall backwards into a chair.

There is this coma of fear now. I know it is silly. I am a romantic and cannot help it. I open a can of hearts and eat them, one by one, by myself. I watch the T.V. lying to me.

The darkness does not ask my permission to enter. My fingers are not willing to make the shape necessary to pick up my pen. I eat my hearts, in their heavy syrup, alone.
Camping

The loon holds to the dark throat of night. A clear hollow bone. The lake touches itself, turns over and reveals the secret wet belly. Fish float near the shore, swollen. I hold myself together by eating everything on my plate. The fine bones of each trout fill up the bag at the center of the circle. I chew carefully and pull bits of flesh out of my mouth with each bone, to make sure. These are thrown out of the circle into the darkness; everything small waits for this evening where there are no women and we are wrong when we think we are doing fine. Nobody sleeps. It is a matter of pride. I have chosen a spot to sit, and I will not move. The lake sleeps away from us, disinterested. We drag lines through it in an effort to make it come to life. We even burn a spot on the edge of the water. Resentment building, the fire pulls itself lower, and stops talking. We all stop talking.
The evening backs out of view - slowly, and we sit like lovers. The drink feels its way down the track of the throat and drops into the black belly.

A light comes from a source we do not know, but it is not frightening and we still feel comfortable. Your eyes are dark and shine in your head, like polished objects of great value.

The breeze begins to grow cooler and the curtains jump. A vase falls inside me. You have never been here before. Jesus, you are a young animal. You don't know your life will change faster than you. Leave you alone. You will be sorry you didn't do this or that. Sorry things didn't work out better.

Talent turns out to be common. You write because you love your own handwriting. Because someone who loves you also likes the work. The darkness comes closer to your face and touches it.
Losing stars

They escape through the eyes like secrets. They will not be held. Even as the white cells fall dead among the days, a silver ounce of light is going up to a new place.

We are jealous. We cannot agree among ourselves, even who fills their mouth first with bread.

The color in the eyes diminishes, and fills in the face with a faint tattoo of pain.

We have glimpsed this, time and again, and still insist upon pulling ourselves down in it.

This is not fair. A match cannot aspire to be only smoke.

Somewhere there is a huge black dog whose only job is to bite flesh.

There is also the young woman whose teeth are missing, who collected them as they fell from the mouth, and put them in a jar filled with tears.
III

THE TABOOED REALM
the dreamer's sick bed

The rain falls; ominous, hard
drops of water that go straight
into the ground. The ground is
an illusion.
The source of the ------- River
is said to be made up from this
phenomenon. Deep in the earth.
Under our feet, in the skulls
of people we did not love. There
the distilled water collects
like a memory of memories.
So pure and cold and clear.
Inside the globe of the brain
it happens; a reverse weeping
into the eyes, back into the earth.
Collects in a shining black pool:
memory. So pure and cold and secret.
The dreamer's sick bed becomes
an island, with the privilege of
loneliness, hard secret privacy,
 flying on the tallest palm, wagging
like a silent tongue in the tradewind.
The dreamer's sick bed becomes
a throne, where the left hand holds
the past tightly, a half-smile on
the lips. The right hand is empty
but holds something invisible.
The dreamer hunts for anything
familiar. Alone behind the rhythm of
his eyes, the slow walking of the sea.
Do this: swallow a picture
of yourself. That is the beginning,
to know from the inside out.
You will see through those eyes,
a grey vision of the underlife.
Talk to yourself, discuss the
fear. Grow fatter on the loneliness.
You will find it so much
more comforting to lean on
your own breast. To sleep
under your own hair. Carefully
touch the points of color in
the eyes. They are like fish,
touched with a dry finger,
a fungus will grow. If you
cannot ignore the black dog
which follows you, come back.
You will never do this again.
Locked in a vision

There is an extra heart, strapped to the back to make you more humble.
There is another lie that waits to be told, breathing lightly, confident and sure in the cool air before the evening drops into place. The other mouth swallows words like shadows, hungry and dark and thin.
The air cools almost instantly and a figure walks into the blackness for the last time. It turns, flashes a pale hand like a mirror and falls dead, locked in the eyes forever. A set of blue graves on the horizon.
Pity

So the hand is fast, does not slip, does not even feel the age, the redness, the solid snake, driving distance before it with a tiny but accurate brain.

Perhaps the reason I feel caught; why I am crying.

I am telling you: the dog in my pocket is dead. Not a runaway just dead.

You have cheated me.

A flick of the heart, of a softer flesh. I am like a man who lies in the sun so long his nose just starts bleeding.
Myth

The calm is betraying its own mother.
Disaster as a horse, spooked beyond belief
in our eyes. We rush
to kiss the rusty hand of water.

We two, we are fearful of the present.
We glide a smooth path
an arm's reach from flesh.
Our sorrow comes in the physical
contact. We reach behind ourselves:
in places where our arms will not bend,
we wait for the other to prove it.

Fall off the trail, an omen pure and simple.
My stars, I have not seen you burn
so quickly since we shook our souls like dogs
in the dark hours before the moon was even
quartered.

To wait for light to die is evil.
The corpse touches itself slowly
like an angel.

Your eyes roll inward in an instant
of self-interest.
The corpse will walk away
cracking death like a whip.
A Thousand Years of Moons

In the dim light, a man lowers into his grave. His subconscious is being marked at this point. This is important to remember.

He leaves the job of filling in with earth to another man. He wants to leave quickly.

He thinks while he drives. It was not the peculiar thinness of the hole. He has seemed too wide for it, but that was not it.

There must be a reduction in weight. I mean the soul leaves, doesn't it? And the weight of the traded fluids; there is a difference there.

In the lights, an animal becomes dazzled for an instant, and leaves quickly by the side of the eye.

The radio gives up a slow tune.

A sadness fills the empty seats, and he puts his hand to the invisible knee next to him.

Although there is nothing there, the seat is warm. There is the odor of the sea and the moon pulls the tide of blood, breaking in the heart.
Wounded Heroes

Come home. Come home.
Take the bread of sin from
the lips and wash the land of sorrow
from your clothes.
Pack your few things, friend,
and turn your feet around. Take a step:
in the silence you will hear many steps,
like your name, repeated over and over
again until you think you will go mad.
In the world there will be one small
shuffle in the blackness. Do not fear this,
for your red amulets glow in the night and
set the devils to dancing.
Over there, around the fires, I suppose
you thought of nothing but the faces
of men at rest. Taking their leisure
in the rich soil of a kiss, remembered
for more than it was. Of letters, written
on strips of missing skin.
Of the children: one born blue,
and the other who has lived
in the well since it was three.
To take the trouble
to describe them all would be too much.
But there is a sign in each,
and in the night, when the blackest
clouds move behind the lids, we see
the river pass through the eyes and drive
towards its source.
I met you last night, floating
above the silver weed and bloody cress.
Your hand passed into the stream and
tore an invitation from the silted face
under the water.
You spoke in a voice not familiar,
heavy with hope; a blind tongue slowly
rising to the lips for air.
Your eyes opened and shut like
the valves of a tired heart.
And I took you, too, swallowed
my heart, but that is not clear. I remember
only that I was drowning, that you pulled me
out and scaled me, and cleaned me and
packed me away in your frozen hair.
Black Parrot

Rare and mean: they do not speak, but understand perfectly. I wish he would come, like a devil's tooth, and grind against me. I need a listener. It's a strange way that we meet. And I know about those habits you have been hiding.
The copper coins eaten like carrots to preserve the sight. The roll of wet bills, stuck behind the commode.
And when you touch yourself in the dark parts of the night, that hard plastic in the beak softens and perhaps a silver tear escapes to dampen the feathers.
So black, they are green. I thank you for coming. Take my wrists firmly and slowly we rise through this ceiling; leave the tiny red drops on the pillow.
IV

THE WAY THINGS GO
The earth turned dark

When a man says, "I am afraid of the dark." he means he is afraid to be alone in the dark. He could wear a green blanket over his head and not be afraid.

He can laugh at himself, to himself, until his heart is so full it hurts him. He could place stones over both eyes and drive to the store for cigarettes. He could play the guitar with hard strokes against the soft part of the wrist.

He can write letters, asking god to extend daylight to 24 hours. Or he can trust himself, this man, to feel the damp feminine tears come out of his eyes and know that at least he is alone.
It is extremely cold. So cold we
do not speak to each other, only
with thick fingers of wool.
A man in a green suit stands
above us and blows into his
hands. This day when the band
never showed up. And everyone
wished they had some small
vial of something stashed away in
themselves.
We have been treated fairly
though. We cannot complain. There
is news that startles, and there
is news that no one can deny.
We choose the latter and begin
to think about the fires, and the
eyes time the beat of the green
suit as it rises and becomes,
on the spot, an evergreen. (This
is symbolic of our love for
ourselves.) Everyone cheers as
the first branches catch fire.
green knife, somber color

The shape of one wing, flat
and sharp, comes through the darkness
alive. I am seeing this happen.
Green knife, who carries the bitter
news of failure over the night's wires.
Comes close to look in each window
for the right person.
Is sad because of the duty, a job
is a job. Nevertheless, it is
so difficult.
Finding me will be a trick.
I am running from that somber color.
There is a division in the air
around that wing, like a lie splitting
into two pieces, each as potent and
hungry as the other. You see there
is no real chance to escape.
You must lie still and wait for
the knock at the door of the throat.
I look about wildly

The doves eat corn from
an old shirt in the cemetery.
Each morning they swallow
the yellow nuggets like virtues,
teeth; like benzedrine.
Last night was not well.
He coughed until he coughed out
his own black brains.
We have a good life, though.
We watch the doves come slowly
through the morning.
We watch the cemetery sink
into the ground.
We bet we can hit one stone
or another with the mysterious
rocks we find around our graves.
The river. The cemetery. The doves.
This picture comes near
in the moonlight. When the dead
neighbor's dog howls, it only
comes closer. Comes nearer.
There is a fear in the eye
that will not be put out.
Blue Dove

I was just thinking
of you. I have read
the letter many times over.
It is a good one. It is you.
I like that. But I don't understand:
it was sent to me by such
a strange means. I will never
catch up to you, you devil, you
crumb that plugs the brain.

Ah, well, I am innocent.
You see, that is important.
It means I am tough, without
knowing it. I am smart too.
Only, I feel lonely. Like the
sad corn in the dog's dark stool,
I am planted in a field I've never
seen.

So, it is soon back to reality.
Normalcy. A cup of coffee.
A cuttle for the beak. Ten blue
feathers make your eye,
your hole, a darker blue
turns inward.
The Chameleon's Dish

for Dick Hugo

On a nest of rag and weed I have laid the bed of a future. It holds little warmth, but the possibilities amaze me: I will not be alone, but I will be by myself.
I want a red car to drive to the moon, it would be like a spot of blood in the center of a blind white eye. That is pleasing.
I see a damp road in front of me; the mountains block out the vision after a few hundred yards.
I can't see what is coming. And when it appears, out of the blue, it is all the more exciting. I say to myself, "What do you make of it?" and I am getting no answers.
I want the blue station wagon to pull over and let me past. I take a chance and get by and I see there is no driver, and queer license plates that mean nothing. A black deer follows the shadow of the arroyo. A small yellow fire burns two or three ranges away. I want a silver car to drive into the lake. It would be like a tear rolling back into the eye.
I discuss the way things go
with me. The cypress wave but
I don't know them.
These forward oceans talk,
the waves in my voice, get away,
my eyes drop slowly to their knees
and stay there. Not wishing to look,
they stay hidden.
A real wind enters up the cold sand;
chants at the moon. I climb up
the beach into the water. It is so cool
and I am not afraid of the sea.
My shoes of iron, as I wade out,
slowly move the sand. I can see that.
I feel like I'm helping nature
to develop; my vision of
two trees, the sea, the fish are there.
The breeze: small bodies turning in the air.
V

GOING HOME
Building the thing was difficult.
The soft young wrists that helped,
made a hammer do things it was
never meant to. We work alike.
Casting and reeling, over and over,
until we have dragged every horrible
body from the lake. Not only bodies;
but arms and legs and small pieces
where the whole idea is impacted
and lets itself be pulled apart.
I meet everyone, and wonder
what they think of me, the overweight
tongue you have swallowed.
The irony of geography bears this out:
where the sun goes, they go.
Like old children, they go south as if
falling, having no strength to stay
where they are.
The three of us holding each other hard,
a self-taught triangle with weak sides,
and angles that don't fit.
Scars

It suddenly occurs to me, like a poke in the chest, that she also has fear in her makeup. This isn't good for me to think. I am used to being the wounded, & this gun in my hand feels silly. For a moment, the knife in my teeth is a piece of bad tasting metal with one sharp edge.

A strange scar crawls out of her pants; lighter fossilized skin, a centipede etched above the invisible V. I trace it with my finger and ask how it can live so long without moving. She pretends not to notice me looking.

Where on earth can we go? The fine taste of running away; olive oil and weak blood, gasoline. Everything smacks of where it's been. Where it's going is an odor to the right where the slash heals on the horizon, and, please, the stitches hold.
Lying to Myself

and if you happen to like his eyes,
and lower your own -

I imagine all sorts of things. Mostly the eyes strike me. They are encased in water and make a secret blue, a color lower down, inside the lips, visible only with a hand mirror.

I imagine all sorts of things. I imagine you come to my place; no, we go to your place. If you are not married, we go to your place.

I imagine we are walking, and I am excited and feel so violent that I would kill the first twenty-year-old good-looking well-built motherfucker that tried to sneak a look at you.

I imagine you are already in love with me, and that is the only reason I care for you at all.
Two Victims

This house holds me together. At night, through the poor insulation, I can feel the darkness breaking in. Trying the door. It is not that I am alone. I am old enough.

But this winter, a window stuffed with grey paper, I never thought I could feel it. At night I come here and find a person just like me in my bed. It wears the same comfortable nothing. The eyes flicker and pulse under the thin pink wrappings. I don't wish to wake him, and I am not tired. I sit down to write in my book and hear my voice in the other room, under the influence of sleep. The tears come like pearls; salty and unclear.

If I wake myself, I am afraid it won't be me. I won't like myself, or there will be an odor of a spirit too much like my real story. The one I can't say without breaking apart.
Responsibility

I am going home soon. I have courted the demons in my head until they all lie quiet, naked, and asleep. I look at this new day, grey light, already failing at 8:30. It is on a day like this we meet. My birthday, when I was so downhearted I sat in a warm bath and thought about slicing my white wrists with my cigar. I just felt like that; I would never do it.

Here spring lasted a week. The dust raised and lowered like a shiver we had time to notice. Soon we will be together, and the triangle again complete. Father, Mother, Son. Some part says that is all, some part nothing. I say let me grow older until I recognize it. A vision seventy years collects and presents to you like a watch. You will realize the prices you paid were fair. It is worth so much. Several sets of teeth in the ring. The eyes devalued considerably. The fear lodged in your head like a sharp stone.
And goddamn it, I am up here -
getting drunk when I'm supposed to
be out talking turkey. Yanking
some sense into the natives.
Oh, Juanita, what's the use?
My hands are old and peppered with hair.
My trigger finger cocked forever like
a question. You know how I hate this
business, and my back aches even after
I have slept well.
I'm telling you, Juanita, I don't know
the worth anymore. If the winter is bad -
it seems bad everywhere. If they will sell
you a sick chicken here, why not there?
There are fools and fools. Why here, Juana,
to buy a glass of beer you lose your lips.
The happy girls with fat bellies find
they are carrying only mud - that they
have been tricked. There are so many tears
here, Juanita, that my shoes are always wet,
my feet cold.
Where is the sun we bid on for years?
Where is the house that lies like a mole
on a rolling skin of green wheat? The place
where the boy can grow and fatten his eyes.
the mere naturalism of death

A man falls, placed into a shadow on
the ground he will be in... came from.
His wife cries solid little tears that sit
on the ground before crawling underneath.
She doesn't know what to do. His heart
is quiet, and a blue shape, like a stick,
leaves the spine at the coccyx and
zig-zags through her, imbuing her with dolor
and the vague feeling that something important
has happened. She holds this man in her arms,
and thinks of a similar occasion.
Happy and young, she held this cold head
and hid her fingers in the hair so they looked,
in her private vision, like 8 penises.
The walking cane he carved with their names
and the date of their marriage.
She thinks, "the woman is always left."
Again tears come and land on the shirt in
a pattern like stars. "There is significance
there." she thinks, and pushes down on the
sprung eyelids. She finds one word left
in his mouth, and, not showing it to anybody,
swallows it. She tastes the 40 years, minute
by minute, and the chicken they had for lunch.