

## **G & J**

### I

#### **J MISSES G**

You feel me and my misery over bleak distances,  
my existence a flicker around your senses -  
and yet you do nothing to intervene.  
You have a black patch on your third eye  
and a joker in your tarot.  
You are part Prufrock  
and I am part Uri Geller -  
together our lives are measured out  
in bent coffee spoons.

### II

#### **J SPOTS G**

What are you doing here?  
You are not supposed to appear  
in the red cloud of your car,  
drifting along the periphery  
of my limited vision -  
ponytailed and petulant,  
ubiquitous as a horsefly.  
You are supposed to be in Mexico,  
unearthing bones of the merrily dead  
and scratching out cats on your sketch pad -  
cats and cacti and women with claws.

### III

#### **G LEAVES J**

She did not want this man of bookish sorrow.  
He would not fight for her,  
he would not contest.  
Her world could not possibly be supported  
on those round shoulders.  
She was aware of his longing  
and she sympathized -

but sympathy is not erotic.  
She wanted sex and comfort.  
He once told her that he would fill  
her hot tub with tears -  
this did not excite her.

### **NO MORE MISTER NICE GUY**

Spurs spinning  
like clocks slowing down  
the bullet in your chest  
just a bee sting expanding  
and mud is soft on your back  
the tears of barroom hussies  
are cool on your brow  
and your loyal horse  
head bowed saddle vacant  
snorting for a sugar lump  
from your killer's hand  
as your essence your gist  
your pitiful pith  
the everything that made  
you the good guy  
vaults into vultured sky  
through all available exit holes

### **BACKYARD IDYLL**

The book beside you open  
upon words that remain closed  
as a tepid breeze alights  
your bare neck stiff and  
cracking with every languid move  
in every fenced direction  
trees well-armed with fruit  
and sparring sparrows swooping  
and dragonfly sputtering and  
gold-powdered moths easy to catch  
the dust of their wings yellowing

your fingers like nicotine and  
red ants march upon dead red robin  
and wasps gossip in the eaves  
daring you to throw the apple  
that rots by your lawn chair

### **HOLLYWOOD PARK**

The track was slow  
and Dad was losing  
and Mom was fuming  
with repetitive Winstons  
and an anger stored all winter  
while the horses were running  
only as fast as they wanted  
not caring who bet what  
or who had what to lose  
and I was picking up  
all the discarded tickets  
defeat after defeat  
of downbeat confetti  
and Dad yells put those down  
all the bad luck will  
rub off on you –  
and damn if he wasn't right

### **SUNDAYS IN YUCAIPA**

Just one Ford Galaxie  
on two-lane highway  
heading for Grandma  
and her gravel driveway  
and her grapevine gazebo  
and her crabgrass  
revolting with red ants  
and bugs too big to step on  
while in the clapboard house  
Lawrence Welk conducts  
in flurried black and white  
and the ghost of Grandpa Paul  
hangs pungent in the air  
like burning strudel

or maybe mustard gas  
from World War I  
when he fought against us  
his enemy family  
his final resting place  
so I never understood  
his family status  
whether friend or foe  
or foreign infiltrator  
here to make sausages  
of little boys and girls  
because I know he killed bunnies  
and I know he killed chickens  
and he crafted dark lizards  
and thunderbolts from iron  
that I silently played with  
during Polka Parade  
while everyone else murmured  
what a good boy I was  
how quiet and obedient  
with my orange Nehi  
my peanut butter and butter sandwich  
stifling my soprano outbursts  
of Que Sera Sera.