

## ***shoelaces/***

### *1. Low gear*

black & white highways  
ink one-way tracks  
like unmarked graves –  
gas-burning gridirons  
congested & contagious  
sweating out exhaust  
*thunder radio*  
*& static billboards*

exposure bleeds out windshield,  
its motion picture postcards –  
tie-dye tongues squeegee sides,  
shine mirrors fogged by reflection  
plugging exits lathered in entry  
*splatter views*  
*like bugs to glass*

*hands greet shakedown*  
*as monkeys sew pockets;*  
*while 'folk' powder their noise,*  
*spike homemade apple pies –*  
*tastes force-feed ingredients*  
*wipers swat residue,*  
*vents blow cool again*

rumblin' & tumblin'  
past siamese towns  
& backseat growls –  
*squeezed lemons of hungover daze:*  
bittersweet music's rattling crows  
to my spanish lady's ripped nylons  
*aching guitar plucks*  
*missing tooth*

palms rabid & raw  
read like skid marks,  
scrub contributions in tar stains –  
*take it straight or on the rocks?*  
ponies ridin' low & easy  
*till desert thirsts*  
*horsepower...*

## 2. Idle

sharpen corners  
`round every thrill,  
gargle sand where  
language left me –  
see god where  
I shouldn't.

*been having this nagging dream...*  
Bob Dylan stones me,  
speaks harmonica, harps,  
"money doesn't talk, it swears"  
*"uck", I mutter, short on f's.*

talk's a proposition  
selling out alphabet,  
time acts as bruiser –  
hustle with muscle:

strip you of loose change,  
violated by meters –  
sounds creep up on silence  
& mailmen play hangman.

streets run short of breath  
chopped onto blocks  
humped under pack animals  
lugging road-kills;

stacked & racked,  
boxed & cornered:  
multiply by squares  
dividing identical stories  
carved from molds  
impressed with themselves –

caveman sharp:  
blunt, stone edge  
cutting corners –  
circular driveways  
looking for angles.

rustler's road  
forks red-hot iron  
ready to brand –  
*sizzle & stamp,*  
*spit me over seasoned.*

### 3. 5<sup>th</sup> & parked

but hard shifts break clear & clean,  
weave treads ruts etch into patterns –  
signal asphalt war's two-way street,  
yellow streaks painted down its spine,  
fears dividing lines fingered sand-like:

"S-H- dot I- cross T, IOU's NOTHIN!"  
hands yet feel the shake  
my brain rolls over...  
*delayed series of hiccups,  
pedestrian speedbumps*

ole' hitch & ditch – seat belt clicks:  
flashin' steel clippin' red-eyed bulbs,  
dash signs lining up as Gabriel horns  
*pistons' rockin' to  
cylinders' drummin'*

grind gears, engine pumpin' iron,  
notch grooves nerving pulse –  
whip electric horsemen full throttle!  
*redline hairpins  
& needles*

*climbin' rails...treetops clotheslined  
...wind prancin'...hair laughin'  
...my shirt sleeves clappin'*

top-down ridin' bare  
on mountain's back...  
two-lane backdrops  
snake concrete rivers  
*jus' a-floatin' highlands  
tumbleweed & pitchfork*

stopped for some rock & gravel,  
stretch landscape...

an indian hands me a free cigar  
marking lines of reason

black man taps me a gumdrop tune,  
walk a rainbow in his smile

dark haired woman fills compassion  
worth its pot of beans

*kaleidoscopes color skies  
looking with the good eye*

#### 4. Mileage

then there's them shoes - human odometer –  
generation skin species size social standing,  
sort of mammal with bow ties,  
align balance always overdue.

as I bend to examine,  
drop a knee & secret prayer  
to saints elsewhere...  
they just don't serve me well –

tight wrap over too much play:  
right place at the ~~wrong~~ time  
leaning by the 'welcome' sign.  
why's comfort so small?

*I see her face bathed fresh & crisp  
washed by memory's smaller waves  
when time took up all the space –  
the naked laugh danced on a smile*

*now I'm reeling on a narrowed edge  
like a fish out of water sucking for air  
breathing at the mouth  
of an open wound...*

years rarely play straight  
running numbers racket;  
Romans throw bones  
in exchange for flesh –

there's no future in mirrors,  
death keeps looking back:  
the past sworn to promise  
keeps sleeping with memory.

*problem facing forward  
is what it owes today –  
fugitives are city's ghosts  
& pleasure's overdressed.*

## 5. Hot pursuit

THEY'RE ON ME NOW!

t-bones & clawfish  
fresh off turnstile  
pin tail on donkey  
not up to speed –  
grease paper trail  
indebted to collect

I'm shippin' air-mail  
peeling rubber stamps –  
one hand on the wheel  
the other grips love root,  
eyes roll eggs in my head  
lampposts blur beaten rain  
[window shoppin' lookin' out  
– how to get off the display]

*the old workhorse and I –  
grifter & drifter at the tail end  
of a final ride in a fixed race –  
chasing after that first high  
rollin' craps shootin' stars!*

whole lotta walters  
& back door nellies on scent:  
barnyard bumper dogs  
sniff blood out of smoke

but I still have the shoelaces - a decoy -  
pull strings through loopholes,  
give shoes the slip, tie to rear mirror –  
I accelerate machinery:  
brace my spanish fly for resistance  
wedged into the seat,  
jam guitar where wood meets medal  
hardens process –  
wild chords perform the requiem:  
as behind me,  
*I watch a mannequin against the sunset  
go barefoot...*